The Radiance of the Secrets of Prayer

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point

In this text, Muhsin Qara'ati explains in detail the meaning of Worship and Intention, as well as how different stages of worship are acquired. He then goes on to explain the different actions of Prayer in detail, such as the first Takbir, and the recitation of the Suras. The author explains each step throughly, outlining its importance and our .understanding of the action

Foreword

In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful

The precious legacy left behind by the Holy Prophet's Household {ahl al-Bayt} (may peace be upon them all) and their followers' preservation of this legacy from the

menace of extinction is a perfect example of an all-encompassing school {maktab}, .which embraces the different branches of Islamic knowledge

This school has been able to train many talented personalities by quenching them from this gushing fountain. This school has presented scholars to the Muslim ummah who, by following the Holy Prophet's Household ('a), have occupied the station of clarifying doubts and skepticisms brought forth by various creeds and intellectual currents both inside and outside Muslim society. Throughout the past centuries, they .have presented the firmest answers and solutions to these doubts

Anchored in the responsibilities it is shouldering, the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) World Assembly has embarked upon defending the sanctity of risalah {messenger ship} and its authentic beliefs—truths which have always been opposed by the chiefs and leaders of anti-Islamic

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sects, religions and trends. In this sacred path, the Assembly regards itself as a follower of the upright pupils of the school of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a)—those who have always been ready to refute those accusations and calumnies and have tried to be always in the frontline of this struggle on the basis of the expediencies of time and .space

The experiences in this field, which have been preserved in the books of scholars belonging to the school of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), are unique in their own right. It is because these experiences have been based upon knowledge {'ilm} and the preeminence of the intellect and reasoning, and at the same time, they are completely devoid of blind prejudice, whim and caprice. These experiences address experts, scholars and thinkers in a manner that is acceptable to a healthy mind and .{the pure human natural disposition {fitrah

In a bid to assist those who are in quest of truth, the Ahl al-Bayt('a) World Assembly has endeavored to enter a new phase of these worthy experiences within the framework of research and translating the works of contemporary Shi'ah writers or

.those who, through divine guidance, have embraced this noble school

The Assembly is also engaged in the study and publication of the valuable works of pious predecessors and outstanding Shi'ah personalities so that those who are thirsty for the truth could quench their thirst from this refreshing fountain by listening and embracing this truth, which the Holy Prophet's Household ('a) has

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.offered as a gift to the entire world

It is hoped that our dear readers would not deprive the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) World Assembly of their valuable opinions, suggestions and constructive criticisms in this .arena

We also invite scholars, translators and other institutions to assist us in propagating .the pure Muhammadan Islam

We ask God, the Exalted, to accept this trivial effort and enhance it further under the auspices of His vicegerent on earth, Hadrat al-Mahdi (may Allah, the Exalted, expedite .(his glorious advent

It is appropriate here to express our utmost gratitude to Hujjat al-Islam wa'l-Muslimin Shaykh Muhsin Qara'ati for writing the book,(١) and to Mr. Mansoor Limba for translating it, as well as to all our honorable colleagues in accomplishing this task .especially the dear ones in the Translation Office for undertaking this responsibility

Cultural Affairs Department

The Ahl al-Bayt ('a) World Assembly

Preface

In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful

أَلْحَمْدُ للهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِيْنَ

وَ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلىٰ سَيِّدِنَا وَ نَبِيِّنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَ آلِهِ الطَّاهِرِيْنَ وَ لَعْنَةُ اللهِ عَلىٰ أَعْدَائِهِمْ أَجْمَعِيْنَ

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, and may the blessings of Allah be upon our Master and Prophet, Muhammad, and his pure progeny, and may the curse .of Allah be upon all their enemies

Today, it is imperative to explain the teachings of Islam in the areas of “beliefs” {‘aqa’id}, “laws” {ahkam} and “morality” {akhlaq} in simple language based on Qur’anic verses and Prophetic traditions to meet the needs of those who are .interested

,{Through divine succor {tawfiq

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Muhsin Qara’ati, Parto-yi az Asrar-e Namaz (Tehran: Setad-e Iqameh-ye Namaz, -١ .Winter ١٣٧٩ (٢٠٠٠)), pp. ٢٥١

the televised presentation of the discussions on “Lessons from the Qur’an,” was welcomed by our religious community for some years, and some of these discussions were published. The discussions on the basic principles of religion {usul ad-din} and .the Day of Resurrection {ma‘ad} {in particular} are among them

After these, discourses pertaining to the branches of religion {furu‘ad-din} were also meant to follow. However, on account of urgent need, “Hajj” was presented to you earlier. Now, prayer {salah} is at your disposal, thanks to the blessings of the blood of .martyrs

Although useful and valuable books and brochures about prayer and other branches of Islam have already been published, it is still hoped that owing to its novelty of approach, simplicity of discussion, suitable organization of the subjects, and reliance on ample Qur’anic verses and hadiths,(١) this volume would be useful to all readers, particularly teachers, who are presenting the truths of religion in class sessions. The main references used in organizing these discussions are the Qur’an, and the hadith,

.for which both Sunni and Shi'ah books have been utilized

The principal sources being consulted (apart from the Qur'an and Nahj al-Balaghah)(۲) are Bihar al-Anwar, Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, Mustadrak al-Hakim, Usul al-Kafi, Man La Yahdhuruh al-Faqih, Ghurar al-Hikam, Kanz al-'Ummal, and others .whose particular references are indicated in the footnotes

In preparing the contents of this treatise, valuable ideas and supplementary suggestions offered have also been utilized, which are hereby acknowledged with profound gratitude. The positive aspects of this book are related to the

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Hadith (pl. ahadith): tradition or report, specifically the traditions of the Prophet (S) -۱ and the infallible Imams ('a), i.e. their sayings, actions and tacit approvals of others' {.actions, or the narrations of these. {Trans

Nahj al-Balaghah (Peak of Eloquence) is a collection of speeches, sayings and -۲ letters of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Talib ('a) compiled by Sharif ar-Radi Muhammad ibn al-Husayn (d. ۴۰۶ AH/۱۰۱۶). Contents of the book concern the three essential topics of God, man and the universe, and include comments on scientific, literary, social, ethical, and political issues. Except the words of the Glorious Qur'an and of the Holy Prophet (S), no words of man can equate it in eloquence. So far, more than ۱۰۱ exegeses have been written on the Nahj al-Balaghah, indicating the importance of this treatise to scholars and learned men of research and investigation. For more information, visit: http://www.al-islam.org/nahjul {.[۱۰]. {Trans

luminous statements of God, the Prophet (S)(۱) and the infallible Ahl al-Bayt(۲) ('a)(۳) .and written with their blessings. Any weaknesses, however, are mine

The translations of Qur'anic verses and hadiths are relatively free translations and sometimes accompanied by explanations and addenda. It should not remain unsaid that the content of this volume has been shown earlier in the state television of the Islamic Republic of Iran. It has been put into writing with some corrections and

.modifications

I beseech God, the Exalted, for sincerity of intention {ikhlas}, dedication to purpose {tawfiq} and eloquence in speech and writing. I hope that this trivial attempt at inclining people toward the great obligatory act of prayer is fruitful and plays a vital role in the dissemination of Islamic culture throughout the world—an obligation which is incumbent upon each of us. It is also hoped that by clinging to its religious identity and rich Islamic culture, our great Islamic nation can serve as a formidable stronghold .of truth and a strong refuge for the deprived ones of the world

.{Verily, He is the Bestower of Success {innahu wali at-tawfiq

Muhsin Qara'ati

Ramadhan ۱۴۱۰ AH

Farvardin ۱۳۶۹ AHS

(Circa March-April ۱۹۹۰)

{Worship {'ibadah

point

Before embarking on the discussion of prayer, I shall deal with the meanings, philosophy and dimensions of worship {'ibadah} and servitude as they are the spirit of .prayer

?{Why worship {'ibadah

Worship {'ibadah} means the expression of abasement {dhillah}, the highest form of humility and homage, before God. As to its importance, it is enough to state that worship is the purpose

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۱- The abbreviation, "S", stands for the Arabic invocative phrase, sallallahu 'alayhi wa

alihi wa sallam {may God's salutation and peace be upon him and his progeny}, which {.is used after the name of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S). {Trans

Ahl al-Bayt: according to authentic hadiths recorded in both Sunni and Shi'ah - ٢ sources, the term Ahl al-Bayt, and interchangeably 'Itrah and Al, is a blessed Qur'anic appellation that belongs exclusively to the Prophet, 'Ali, Fatimah, Hasan, and Husayn ('a). The members of this Family of five, with the Prophet Muhammad (S) at its head, were the ones present at the time the Qur'anic verses regarding their virtues were being revealed to the Prophet (S). However, nine other Imams from the descendants of Imam al-Husayn ('a) are also in this chosen Family, the final one being Imam al-{.Mahdi ('a). For further information, visit: http://www.al-islam.org/faq [١١]. {Trans

The abbreviation, "'a" stands for the Arabic invocative phrase, 'alayhi's-salam, - ٣ 'alayhim'us-salam, or 'alayha's-salam {may peace be upon him/them/her}, which is used after the names of the prophets, angels, Imams from the Prophet's progeny, {.and saints ('a). {Trans

behind the creation of all beings and the mission {bi'thah} of the prophets ('a) (the creational world {'alam at-takwin} and the legislative world {'alam at-tashri'}, :respectively). God says

(وَ ما خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَ الْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ)

(I did not create the jinn and humans except that they may worship Me."(١)"

:The mission of all the prophets ('a) has been to invite the people to worship God

(وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِى كُلِّ أُمَّهٍ رَّسُولاً أَنِ اعْبُدُواْ اللّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُواْ الطَّاغُوتَ)

Certainly We raised an apostle in every nation {to preach:} 'Worship Allah, and keep" (away from the Rebel'."(٢)

So, the objective behind the creation of the universe and the mission of the prophets ('a) has been the worship of God. However, it is clear that God, the Exalted, is in no :need of our worship

(فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنكُمْ)

"Yet Allah is Independent of you."(3)

The benefit of worship returns to the worshippers themselves, as simply as the pupils' decision to study their lessons is to their own advantage and has no gain for the teacher.

Reasons for worship

point

The following reasons persuade man to worship and serve God:

1. Greatness of God

When man sees the greatness and magnificence of God, he unconsciously feels humble and weak before Him, just as a person who regards himself insignificant before a distinguished person and scholar, also honors and respects him.

2. Feelings of dependence

Man's nature is such that he feels humble before some one upon whom he is dependent. Our very existence depends upon the will of God and we need Him all the time. This feeling of need and

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1- Surah adh-Dhariyat 51:56. In this volume, the translation of Qur'anic passages is adapted from Sayyid 'Ali Quli Qara'i, The Qur'an with a Phrase-by-Phrase English Translation (London: Islamic College for Advanced Studies Press, 2004). {Trans.}

2- Surah an-Nahl 16:36.

3- Surah az-Zumar 39:7.

deficiency urges man to worship God—for only He is the Ultimately Perfect and Independent. It is stated in some hadiths that if there were no death, poverty and sickness, some people would never humble themselves before God.

3. Awareness of blessings

Man loves to possess and enjoy blessings. Remembering the abundant blessings of God can be the strongest motive for worshipping Him. In the litanies {munajat} of the infallible Imams ('a), the blessings of God, including those that are related to those prior to the birth of man, are initially mentioned, and in this way man shows his love to God and than he humbly presents his requests. God also says:

(فَلْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ هَذَا الْبَيْتِ الَّذِى أَطْعَمَهُم مِّن جُوعٍ وَآمَنَهُم مِّنْ خَوْفٍ)

"Let them worship the Lord of this House, who has fed them {and saved them} from hunger, and secured them from fear."(۱)

In another verse, man is asked to worship God who created him.

۴. fitrah} Human nature}

Worship is an instinctive and integral part of human nature. Being innate, man sometimes treads the correct path and worships God. When misled, he is drawn to the worship of the sun, stones, wood, the cow, money, spouses, and taghuts.(۲)

The prophets ('a) have not come to instill the sense of worship in man. Rather, their mission is to guide this natural disposition in the right direction. 'Ali ('a) said:

فَبَعَثَ اللهُ مُحَمَّداً بِالْحَقّ لِيُخرِجَ عِبادَهُ مِنْ عِبادَهِ الأَوْثانِ إلى عِبادَتِهِ.

"God thus sent down Muhammad in truth to stop His servants from idol-worship, and invite them to His worship."(۳)

Most

۱- Surah al-Quraysh ۱۰۶:۳-۴.

۲- The term taghut applies to any idol, object, or individual that prevents men from doing what is good, and leads them astray. The term has been used eight times in the Qur'an. Prior to Islam, taghut had been the name of one of the idols of the Quraysh tribe. This name is used also to mean Satan. Moreover, the term is used to indicate

one who rebels against lofty values, or who surpasses all bounds in his despotism and tyranny and claims the prerogatives of divinity for himself whether explicitly or {.implicitly. {Trans

.Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon ١۴٧ -٣

of the Qur'anic verses related to worship invite people to the divine unity in worship {tawhid fi'l-'ibadah} and not to the spirit of worship, because that spirit of worship already exists in man. It is like the desire for food which exists in every infant, but if it !is not guided, he will eat mud instead of food and enjoy eating it

Were it not for the leadership of the prophets ('a), the direction of this instinct would be elsewhere, and instead of God, false and futile deities would be worshipped. Just as during the forty days of the absence of Hadhrat(١) Musa (Moses) ('a), the people .through the temptation of Samiri started worshipping the golden calf

Role of worship

point

Worship means devoting all the dimensions of life to the divine will and pleasure. Giving divine meaning to all activities has significant effects on the life of man, some :of which are the following

Making the perishable perpetual .١

Man and all his efforts will perish, but whatever is done for His pleasure will remain as :an asset. The Holy Qur'an says

(ما عِنْدَ كُمْ يَنْفَدُ وَ ما عِنْدَ اللهِ باقٍ)

(That which is with you will be spent but what is with Allah shall last."(٢"

:It also says elsewhere

(كُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ إِلَّا وَجْهَهُ)

(Everything is to perish except His Face."(٣"

۲. Changing the material into the spiritual

If the purpouse behind {man's} deeds be a Godly one if man could set the intention, motive and direction of his activities along the path of the divine will, and conduct himself as a true servant of God,

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۱- Hadrat: The Arabic word Hadrat is used as a respectful form of address. {Trans.}
۲- ۱۶:۹۶ Surah an-Nahl.
۳- ۲۸:۸۸ Surah al-Qasas.

even his mundane acts such as eating, dressing, traveling, visiting, housekeeping, studying, and all his daily chores would become spiritual. On the contrary, sometimes even the most sacred of works, if done with materialistic and worldly motives, could lose their worth.

۳. Individual and collective development

Worship of God demands a total disregard of personal whims and caprice; non-glorification of any race, garment, language, land, and city; association with God, the Ultimate Power and Perfection. And gratitude to the Bestower of blessings. Taken together, they play an important role in the intellectual development of the individual and society collectively. Worship means moving along the straight path of God:

(وَأَنْ اعْبُدُونِی هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُّسْتَقِیمٌ)

"Worship Me. This is a straight path." (۱)

(وَاسْتَعِینُواْ بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلاَهِ)

"And take recourse in patience and prayer." (۲)

Also, worship individually protects human beings from caprice, sin and temptation, and a devoted society that worships God consciously rejects the worship of taghuts, tyrants and superpowers. 'Allamah Iqbal Lahuri said:

آدم از بی بصری بندگی آدم کرد

گوهری داشت ولی نذر قباد و جم کرد

یعنی از خوی غلامی ز سگان پستتر است

من ندیدم که سگی پیش سگی سرخم کرد

,Due to a lack of insight, man serves another man

,He possessed a gem but gave it to others

,He is worse than dogs in his slavish demeanor

.I have yet to see a dog bow down before another

Worship improves individuals as well as societies. In most cases, the corruption in society emanates from, and is caused by the inclination to worship any other, besides .God

Dimensions of worship

point

In the culture of

۱- Surah Ya-Sin ۳۶:۶۰-۶۱.

۲- Surah al-Baqarah ۲:۴۵, ۱۵۳.

Islam, worship {'ibadah} is higher than its manifestations such as prayer and fasting. Acts which are beneficial to the people are all acts of worship. We shall point to some :activities which are reckoned as acts of worship in Islam

۱. Reflection on the handiwork of God

:Imam as-Sadiq(۱) ('a) said

لَيْسَت الْعِبادَهُ كَثرَهُ الصَّلوهِ وَ الصَّوْمِ، إِنَّما العِبادَه التَّفَكّرُ فى أَمر اللهِ.

Worship {'ibadah} is not excessive praying and fasting. Verily, worship is reflection" on the handiwork of Allah."(2)

Reflection that makes human beings better acquainted with God has been regarded as an act of worship.

2. Earning a living

The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

أَلْعِبادَهُ سَبْعُونَ جُزْءً أَفْضَلُها طَلَبُ الْحَلال.

"Worship has seventy parts, the best of which is to earn a lawful {halal} (income)."(3)

3. Seeking knowledge

The Prophet of Islam (S) said:

مَنْ خَرَجَ يَطْلُبُ باباً مِنَ الْعِلْمِ لِيَرُدَّ باطِلًا إِلىَ الْحَقِّ وَضالاًّ إِلىَ الْهُدى كانَ عَمَلهُ كعبادهِ أربعين عاماً.

"The act of seeking knowledge in order to refute falsehood and turn deviation into guidance is equivalent to forty years of worship."(4)

4. Rendering service to the people

Many Prophetic traditions assert that service to the people and attending to their problems is far superior to many acts of worship and optional Hajj pilgrimage {'umrah}. In the words of Sa'di,(5)

عبادت بجز خدمت خلق نیستبه تسبیح و سجّاده و دلق نیست

Worship is nothing but service to the people.

It is not rosary, prayer mat and cassock.

5. Waiting for the global government of justice

:The Holy Prophet (S) said

أَفْضَلُ العِبادهِ إِنْتِظارُ الْفَرَجِ.

The best act of worship is to wait for the relief {faraj} (with the advent of Imam al-“ (Mahdi(۶) (‘a)).”(۷)

It is clear that it must also be accompanied by positive and constructive waiting, which paves

p: ۱۰

۱- Ja‘far ibn Muhammad (‘a) entitled, as-Sadiq {The Truthful},” is the sixth Imam from the Prophet’s Progeny (۸۳-۱۴۸ AH). Many of the Sunni and Shi‘ah ‘ulama and scholars attended his teaching classes and seminars. Narrators of tradition have quoted the number of Imam as-Sadiq’s students as four thousand. The socio-economic conditions of his time necessitated utmost efforts to be made by the Imam (‘a) in the areas of expanding authentic and original Islamic teachings and in the training and education of the faithful students. For this reason the books of tradition and other books quote and cite more traditions from Imam Ja‘far as-Sadiq than from any other infallible Imams. See Shaykh Mohammed al-Husayn al-Muzaffar, Imam Al-Sadiq, trans. Jasim al-Rasheed (Qum: Ansariyan Publications, ۱۹۹۸). {Trans.}

۲- Mizan al-Hikmah, vol. ۷, p. ۵۴۲.

۳- Wasa’il ash-Shi‘ah, vol. ۱۲, p. ۱۱.

۴- Muhajjah al-Baydha’, vol. ۱, p. ۱۹.

۵- Shaykh Muslih ad-Din Sa‘di (۱۱۸۴-۱۲۸۳) was one of the greatest Persian poets. Born in Shiraz, he studied Sufi mysticism at the Nizamiyyah madrasah at Baghdad, with Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani and with Shahab ad-Din Suhrawardi. He made the pilgrimage to Makkah many times and traveled to Central Asia, India, the Seljuq territories in Anatolia, Syria, Egypt, Arabia, Yemen, Abyssinia, and Morocco. His best known works are Bustan {Garden} and Golestan {Rose-Garden}, also known as Sa‘di-Nameh. The former is a collection of poems on ethical subjects, while the latter a collection of moral stories in prose. He also wrote a number of odes, and collections

of poems known as Pleasantries, Jests and Obscenities. His influence on Persian, Turkish and Indian literatures has been very considerable, and his works were often translated into European languages from the ١٧th century onward. {Trans.}

٦- It refers to Imam Muhammad ibn Hasan al-Mahdi, the Twelfth and Last Imam from the Prophet's Holy Progeny who is presently in the state of major occultation {ghaybah al-kubra} and will appear on the appointed time in the future to fill the world with truth, justice and faith after being engulfed by falsehood, injustice and unbelief. For further information on the Islamic belief on the Mahdi, see Ayatullah Ibrahim Amini, Imam Mahdi: Just Leader of Humanity, http://www.al-islam.org/mahdi/nontl/index.htm; [١٢] Ayatullah Sayyid Muhammad Baqir as-Sadr and Ayatullah Murtada Mutahhari, Awaited Savior, http://www.al-islam.org/awaited/index.htm [١٣]. {Trans.}

٧- Nahj al-fasahah, statement ٤٠٩.

the ground for the establishment of the just government of al-Mahdi ('a).

Thus, giving divine color {sibghah} to works increases their value and transforms them into acts of worship, at times, even the best acts of worship. Proper intention is like an alchemy that makes every invalid meral into gold. Acts performed with the intention of seeking nearness to God shall become acts of worship. As such, it can be said that the dimensions and manifestations of worship cannot be counted. A benevolent glance at one's father and mother, or the countenance of the 'ulama'; looking at the Qur'an, the Ka'bah, a just leader, or a brother in faith, are also acts of worship.(١)

How we should worship

point

The manner of performing worship must be learned from the Qur'an and the progeny {'itrah} of the Prophet (S) (after him) just as the address of every house must be sought from its owner. Therefore, we need to see what the verses of the Qur'an and the hadiths of the Infallibles {ma'sumin}(٢) ('a) consider as the best acts of worship and how they ('itrah ('a)) describe them. Let us look at the statements of the pious

:{’saints {awliya

Conscious worship .۱

:It is stated in a hadith, thus

رَكْعَتانِ مِنْ عالِمٍ خَيْرٌ مِنْ سَبْعِينَ رَكْعَةً مِنْ جاهِلٍ.

Two rak‘ahs {cycles or units} of prayer of a scholar {‘alim} are better than seventy“ (rak‘ahs of prayer of an ignorant person {jahil}.”(۳

The Messenger of Allah (S) said: “What is accepted in prayer is that which is performed or recited on the basis of

p: ۱۱

."Safinah al-Bihar, under the word “nazar -۱

Ma‘sumin: those possessing the quality of ‘ismah {infallibility}; viz., the Prophet, -۲ Fatimah, and the Twelve Imams (‘a). See A Brief History of the Fourteen Infallibles (Tehran: WOFIS); Sayyid Murtada al-‘Askari, The Twelve Successors of the Holy {.Prophet (S), http://www.al-islam.org/twelve [۱۴]. {Trans

.{Safinah al-Bihar, under the word “‘abd” {servant -۳

(reflection and consciousness.”(۱

:It is thus stated in another hadith

أَلْمُتِعَبِّدُ عَلی غَيْرِ فِقْهٍ كَحِمار الطّاحونه.

He who worships without understanding and discernment is like the donkey of a mill“ (but does not advance.”(۲

It is essential for the person to know what he is doing and reciting, and who he is .addressing, with total presence of mind and heart

The Holy Prophet (S) said: “Two rak‘ahs of conscious prayer is better than an (unconscious night vigil.”(۳

:The Glorious Qur’an states

(يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ لاَ تَقْرَبُواْ الصَّلاَه وَأَنتُمْ سُكَارَى حَتَّىَ تَعْلَمُواْ مَا تَقُولُونَ)

O you who have faith! Do not approach prayer when you are intoxicated, {not} until“ (you know what you are saying.”(۴

Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) said: “The sins of the one who performs two rak‘ahs of prayer (while aware of whom he is addressing and what he is reciting shall be forgiven.”(۵

Fervent worship .۲

Just as the sick do not enjoy eating food, the unenthusiastic worshippers will not also acquire pleasure in worship. Worship must be performed with love, enthusiasm, .fervor and pleasure and not indisposition, languidness and despondency

Cheerfulness in worship is a privilege possessed by the people whose hearts are enamored by Him. Its ground must also be obtained through gnosis {ma‘rifah} and attention {tawajjuh}. Worship under compulsion and imposition leads nowhere. :Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) said

لا تُكْرِهوا إِلَى أَنْفُسِكُم العِبادَه.

(Do not enforce worship on yourself.”(۶“

Just as we ardently wish to meet a beloved person or a great personality, we must also ardently desire meeting God and worshipping Him. The holy saints {awliya’} and the

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.Muhajjah al-Baydha’, vol. ۱, p. ۳۶۶ -۱
.{Safinah al-Bihar, under the word “‘abd” {servant -۲
.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۴, p. ۲۵۹ -۳
.Surah an-Nisa’ ۴:۴۳ -۴
.Al-Wafi, vol. ۲, p. ۱۰ -۵

.Usul al-Kafi, vol. ۲, p. ۸۳ -۶

Infallibles ('a) were astonishingly enamored by the moment of meeting God and (.worshipping Him. (We shall cite some instances of it in future discussions

Sincere worship .۳

Sincerity bestows value and credit to acts of worship. Any act of worship not purely for the sake of God but out of ostentation, hypocrisy, demagogy and advertisement is .devoid of value, and not accepted by God

:The Glorious Qur'an states

(وَلا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَداً)

(And make none sharer of the worship due unto his Lord."(۱"

:Imam ar-Rida(۲) ('a) said

مَنْ شَهّرَ نَفْسَهُ بِالْعِبادَةِ فَاتَّهَمُوهُ عَلَىٰ دِينِه.

You should be skeptical about the piety of one who seeks popularity (in society)" (through worship."(۳

Such people make use of religion to deceive others. Insincere worship is like a lifeless :body and soulless corpse. And the Glorious Qur'an beautifully states

(وَما أُمِرُوا إِلاّ لِيَعْبُدُوا اللهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّين)

And they are ordered naught else than to serve Allah, keeping religion pure for" (Him."(۴

Worshipping submissively .۴

Humility {khushu'} means total attention of the heart to the Lord and Cherisher and a physical and mental state which is worthy of the majesty of God. Worshipping God must be accompanied by a heart filled with the sense of God's grandeur, and its own

insignificance before Him. In describing the upright believers, the Holy Qur’an notices :”the presence of “humility during prayer

(وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ فِى صَلوٰتِهِم خاشِعُونَ)

(And those who are humble in their prayers.”(۵“

This humility of heart should encompass the entire being of the worshipper as if he can see God and feel his own

p: ۱۳

.Surah al-Kahf ۱۸:۱۱۰ -۱

Imam Rida: ‘Ali ibn Musa, eighth of the Twelve Imams, born in ۱۴۸ AH/۷۶۵ CE and -۲ died in ۲۰۳ AH/۸۱۷ CE in Tus (Mashhad). He was poisoned by the ‘Abbasid caliph Ma’mun, who had superficially appointed him as his successor at first, but then grew fearful of the wide following he commanded. His shrine in Mashhad is one of the principal centers of pilgrimage and religious learning in Iran. See Baqir Sharif al-Qarashi, The Life of Imam ‘Ali bin Musa al-Rida, trans. Jasim al-Rasheed (Qum: Ansariyan Publications, ۲۰۰۱); Muhammad Jawad Fadlallah, Imam al-Rida: A Historical and Biographical Research, trans. Yasin T. al-Jibouri, http://www.al-islam.org/al-rida/index.html; [۱۵] Muhammad Mahdi Shamsuddin, “Al-Imam ar-Rida (‘a) and the .[Heir Apparency,” At-Tawhid Journal, http://www.al-islam.org/al-tawhid/heir.htm [۱۶

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۷۰, p. ۲۵۲; Wasa’il ash-Shi‘ah, vol. ۱, p. ۵۸ -۳

.Surah al-Bayyinah ۹۸:۵ -۴

.Surah al-Mu’minun ۲۳:۳ -۵

:worthlessness in front of His power and glory. This is stated in a hadith

أَعْبُدُ اللهَ كَأَنَّكَ تَراه.

(Worship God as if you can see Him.”(۱“

:Another hadith further informs thus

فَصَلِّها لِوَقْتِها صَلاةَ مُوَدِّعٍ.

Perform the prayer within its appointed time in such a manner as if it is your last“ (prayer (and you are bidding farewell to prayer and the world).”(٢

Worshipping in private .۵

Man is not immune from the snares of Satan, and so many acts of worship are tainted with self-conceit, ostentation and publicity. The way to overcome this defect is to :worship in private. The Messenger of Allah (S) said

أَعْظَمُ الْعِبادَهِ أَجْراً أَخْفاها.

(The reward for an act of worship done in private is greater.”(٣“

However, this does not apply to congregational acts of worship (such as Friday and other congregational prayers, and Hajj pilgrimage); for, congregational prayer in the mosque is superior to individual prayer at home. Worshipping in private, in most .cases, prevents ostentation and adulteration of acts of worship

Dangers threatening worship

point

Satan, the avowed and perennial enemy of man is always trying to adulterate his acts :of worship and render them worthless. He makes use of the following ways

{’Ostentation {riya .١

He who worships not for the sake of God but to win the attention of people or to earn popularity and a certain status is ensnared by Satan, and his acts of worship become futile. This havoc in worship sometimes occurs in the intention even before the act itself, thus distancing it from the intention of “seeking nearness to Allah” {qurbatan .{ilallah

{Self-conceit {‘ujb .٢

Satan draws

.Misbah ash-Shari‘ah, p. ۸ -۱
.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۴, p. ۲۲۳ -۲
.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۷۰, p. ۲۵۱ -۳

man, while in the state of worship, toward self-conceit by regarding his acts of devotion as worthy of acceptance, thus sending them down the drain, though they have been started with the name of God and for him. And, as such, man is involved in .pride

Sin .۳

Undoubtedly, sins efface the good effects of devotional acts. After months of sweat and toil for his farm and orchard to yield fruits and products, as a result of a single instance of negligence a fire might burn all of the harvested products, thus rendering all the farmer's efforts futile. Sin is the fire in the crops of our devotions and deeds .which consumes them

In sum, Satan obstructs the pouring of the limpid water into the heart's goblet, or pollutes and contaminates it after the container is full, or makes a hole in the .container so as to waste the water

:In the Makarim al-Akhlaq Supplication, Imam as-Sajjad(۱) (‘a) thus beseeches God

إِلٰهی عَبِّدْنی لَکَ وَلا تُفْسِدْ عِبادَتی بالعُجْبِ... أَعِزَّنی وَلاَ تَبْتَلَیِّنی بِالْکِبْرِ.

O my Lord! Let me be Your servant but do not contaminate my devotion {‘ibadah} " with self-conceit {‘ujb}... Make me honorable {‘aziz} but do not inflict me with pride (۲)".{kibr})

In the words of the Glorious Qur'an, giving alms {sadaqah}, which is a material form of worship, is tainted and rendered void by twitting anyone for a favor done to him

:{{minnh

(يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ لاَ تُبْطِلُواْ صَدَقَاتِكُم بِالْمَنِّ وَالأذَى)

O you who have faith! Do not render your“

Ali ibn al-Husayn: the fourth Imam from the Holy Prophet's Progeny, known as' -١ Zayn al-'Abidin and as-Sajjad (٦٥٨-٧١٢ CE). The son of Imam Husayn by the daughter of Yazdgird, the last Sassanid king of Iran, he was not able to carry arms at Karbala' because of illness, and thus he did not meet the fate of his three brothers. For most of his life he lived in seclusion in Madinah, having contact with only a few select followers. His piety—which is reflected in his prayers whose compilation is known as Sahifah as-Sajjadiyyah—is proverbial. He is buried in the Baqi' cemetery in Madinh. {.{Trans

.As-Sahifah as-Sajjadiyyah, Supplication ٢٠ -٢

(charities void by reproaches and affronts."(١

Planting a shoot does not take much time, but making it bear fruit, keeping it safely growing, and purging it of pests are difficult. Sometimes, the sins or spiritual maladies .wipe off all goodness

:We read in a hadith

إِنَّ الْحَسَدَ يَأْكُلُ الْحَسَناتِ كَما تَأْكُلُ النَّارُ الْحَطَبَ.

(Verily, jealousy consumes all goodness just as the fire consumes firewood."(٢"

It is stated in another tradition: A proud worshipper and a repentant transgressor (sinner) both entered the mosque. Because of his repentant and regretful nature, the transgressor reformed himself and became a righteous believer. Owing to his pride, (however, the worshipper turned into a transgressor.(٣

{Ways of avoiding pride and self-conceit {'ujb

point

Among the most potent dangers threatening worship are pride {kibr} and self-conceit {'ujb}. How can one cure or not become involved in them? By paying attention to the following points, one may avoid or cure these maladies:

1. Have we really worshipped?

Sometimes, man is in a state of compound ignorance {jahl al-murakkab}, thinking that he is engaged in worshipping God while in fact he is going astray and giving extreme importance to his works. At times, unpleasant acts seem "good deeds" to him and Iblis (Satan) is active in this context. The Holy Qur'an points to this "embellishment of evil deeds" {tazyin 'amal su'} in some of its verses, some of which are the following:

(أَفَمَنْ زُيِّنَ لَهُ سُوءُ عَمَلِهِ فَرَآهُ حَسَناً)

"Is someone the evil of whose conduct is presented as decorous to him, so he regards it as good..."(4)

(الَّذِينَ ضَلَّ سَعْيُهُمْ فِي الْحَيَوٰةِ الدُّنْيَا

p: ١۶

١- Surah al-Baqarah ٢:٢۶۴.

٢- Mizan al-Hikmah, under the word "hasad" {jealousy}.

٣- Al-Kafi, vol. ٢, p. ٣١۴.

۴- Surah Fatir (or al-Mala'ikah) ٣۵:٨. Ellipsis. The phrase omitted is 'like one who is truly virtuous?' {Qur'an Translator}

وَهُمْ يَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ يُحْسِنُونَ صُنْعًا)

"Those whose endeavor goes awry in the life of the world, while they suppose they are doing good."(1)

(زُيِّنَ لَهُمْ سُوءُ أَعْمَالِهِمْ)

"Their evil deeds appear to them as decorous."(2)

2. Have our acts of worship been accepted?

On the discussion about the conditions and signs of the acceptance of worship, you will read that the value of acts of worship and prayer lies in their being accepted. God accepts the worship of the meritorious, pious servants, recognizing their spending and alms-giving.(3)

A person not sure of the acceptance of his acts of worship obviously cannot be proud of them.

3. Futile acts of worship

Some sins corrupt and render futile a whole lifetime of prayers and other acts of worship, and people will return empty-handed from the market of deeds. We need to ensure that our prayers and other acts of worship are not accompanied by those sins.(4)

4. Will we achieve redemption?

A noble ending and favorable future are great blessings, which the divine saints {awliya'} have always prayed for. Hadhrat Yusuf ('a) prayed to God that he die a Muslim (who submits to the divine will):

(تَوَفَّنِى مُسْلِمًا)

"Let my death be in submission {to You}."(5)

The Glorious Qur'an states that one of the requests of the men of wisdom to God is for them to die along with the good ones:

(وَتَوَفَّنَا مَعَ الأَبْرَارِ)

"And make us die with the pious."(6)

Requesting guidance along the straight path {sirat al-mustaqim} is the prayer for

constancy along the path, and the Holy Qur'an describes the final ending as belonging to the pious:

(وَ الْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِيْن

p: ١٧

١- Surah al-Kahf ١٨:١٠٤.

٢- Surah at-Tawbah (or, Bara'ah) ٩:٣٧.

٣- Surah al-Ma'idah ٥:٢٧: "But recite unto them with truth the tale of the two sons of Adam, how they offered each a sacrifice, and it was accepted from the one of them and it was not accepted from the other. (The one) said: I will surely kill thee. (The other) answered: Allah accepteth only from those who ward off (evil);" Surah at-Tawbah (or, Bara'ah) ٩:٥٣: "Say: Pay (your contribution), willingly or unwillingly, it will not be accepted from you. Lo! Ye were ever forward folk."

٤- See Surah Hud ١١:١٦: "Those are they for whom is naught in the Hereafter save the Fire. (All) that they contrive here is vain and (all) that they are wont to do is fruitless;" Surah al-Furqan ٢٥:٢٣: "And We shall return unto them the work they did and make it scattered motes."

٥- Surah Yusuf ١٢:١٠١.

٦- Surah Al 'Imran ٣:١٩٣.

(

"(١)And the outcome will be in favor of the God-wary."

Was not Satan with all those acts of worship expelled from the kingdom of God? Were there not those who, after a whole lifetime of prayers and other acts of worship, passed away in the worst state of misguidance? So, one must not be proud of the present state!

٥. Comparing acts of worship and blessings

Whatever we have is from God. The blessings of health, active limbs, faculties, and sustenance are all divine graces. Success in worship also originates from Him. We are

totally enveloped by His blessings. In order to attain felicity and bliss, He invites, guides, encourages, and provides us with opportunities.

He accepts us in His presence in every place, time, circumstance, age, and condition that we may be in. He also accepts the repentant. He is not tired of hearing repetitive petitions and pleadings, nor does He fall short of entertaining His servants.

He accepts unworthy acts of worship and compensates them worthily. He overlooks shortcomings because His favors and blessings are boundless. What is the value of our acts of worship compared to His Benevolence? "And what is the worth of our deeds in comparison to His favors?"

۶. Comparing acts of worship and complacencies

Which are greater in number, our acts of worship or our complacencies and sins? The Holy Qur'an has stated many times:

(فَأَيْنَ تَذْهَبُونَ؟)

"So where are you going?"(۲)

Can our prayers and acts of devotion outweigh our moments of negligence, disobedience, shortcomings, carelessness, and heedlessness?

Imam as-Sajjad ('a) says in a supplication, thus:

وَلَسْتُ أَتَوَسَّلُ إِلَيْکَ

۱- Surah al-A'raf ۷:۱۲۸; Surah Hud ۱۱:۴۹; Surah al-Qasas ۲۸:۸۳.

۲- Surah at-Takwir ۸۱:۲۶.

بِفَضْلِ نَافِلَةٍ مَعَ کَثِيرِ مَا أَغْفَلْتُ مِنْ وَظَائفِ فُرُوضِکَ وَتَعَدَّيْتُ عَنْ مَقَامَاتِ حُدُودِکَ؟

"O Lord! With all this negligence of obligations, violation of limits, and transgressions, how can I come near You through optional and supererogatory acts?"(۱)

Acts of worship are our provision for the hereafter. A long and winding road is before us. Will these acts of worship suffice all this way and meet all our needs? Was the lamentation of 'Ali ('a) not loud enough when he said, "Oh... for lack of provision (for ?"(the long way

After this worldly existence, we are in need of God and His favors in the next stages—in the grave, purgatory {barzakh}, Day of Reckoning {mahshar}, and the hereafter. ?Do all these acts of worship guarantee God's favors

:Abu Darda' says

At the Masjid an-Nabi there was talk about the deeds of those who participated in the Battle of Badr and those who gave their Pledge under the Tree {bay'ah ar-ridhwan}. I said: "The devotion and piousness of 'Ali is greater than all (excluding the Prophet (S))." :When they rejected this claim, I narrated this incident which I personally witnessed

One night, I saw 'Ali ('a) hiding in a palm plantation. I followed him but I lost him. I" thought he had gone home. A few moments later I heard his voice lamenting: "O God! ...Alas for the sin that I have forgotten but You have recorded in my account of deeds... Alas for the burning flame and..." He wept so much to such an extent that

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.As-Sahifah as-Sajjadiyyah, Supplication after the Supererogatory Night Prayer -١

.he became unconscious and motionless. I thought he had passed away

I went to the house of Zahra ('a) to inform her of it. She said: "This situation happens to 'Ali out of his fear of God." So, we brought water and 'Ali ('a) became conscious. On regaining consciousness, he said: "O Abu Darda'! How do you see me on the Day of Resurrection when I will be called to account, and the wrath of God would be certain (for the sinners?" I was dumbfounded and broke down."(١

Yes, taking pride in our insignificant acts of worship without realizing the extent of our .need for the mercy of the Lord is another sign of negligence

{'Comparing our state of worship with that of the divine saints {awliya .۸

Our acts of worship as compared to those of Allah's saints are indeed insignificant. Notwithstanding their infallibility, their preeminence in worship, invocation and .servitude during their lifetimes were incomparable for all time

We who are absolutely defective, weak and dependent need to worship more. Learning about the quality of their worship prevents us from being proud of our (prayers and other acts of devotion. Now, we shall cite some instances:(۲

The Messenger of Allah (S) used to worship so excessively that this verse was .۱ :revealed

(طه ۝ مَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ لِتَشْقَىٰ)

(Ta Ha. We did not send down to you the Qur'an that you should be miserable."(۳"

:Imam al-Mujtaba(۴) ('a) said .۲

مَا كَانَ فِي الدُّنْيَا أَعْبَدُ مِنْ فَاطِمَه. كَانَتْ تَقُومُ حَتّىٰ تَتَوَرَّم قَدَمَاهَا.

I have never seen anyone who surpassed Fatimah in worship. She used"

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴۱, p. ۱۲ -۱

Refer also to other examples cited in the discussion about the prayers of the - ۲ .(Infallibles ('a

Surah Ta Ha ۲۰:۱-۲. It is a hadith recorded in Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۱۶, p. ۲۰۲; Tafsir Nur -۳ .ath-Thaqalayn, vol. ۳, p. ۳۶۶

Imam Hasan al-Mujtaba: son of Imam 'Ali and second of the Imams from the - ۴ Prophet's progeny. He was poisoned in ۵۰ AH/۶۷۰ CE after spending most of his life in seclusion in Madinah. See Shaykh Radi Al-Yasin, Sulh al-Hasan: The Peace Treaty of

Al-Hasan, trans. Jasim al-Rasheed (Qum: Ansariyan Publications, ۱۹۹۸), http://www.al-islam.org/sulh/ [۱۷]. {Trans.}

to stand in worship to such an extent that her feet would swell."(۱)

۳. Imam al-Baqir(۲) ('a) said: "Imam Zayn al-'Abidin ('a) used to perform a thousand rak'ahs {units or cycles} of prayer day and night as the Commander of the Faithful ('a) used to do. He had five hundred palm trees beside each of which he used to pray two rak'ahs of prayer.(۳)

۴. Imam al-Baqir ('a) narrated:

I came in and I saw that my father's feet were swelling; his complexion changing; his eyes turning red; his forehead bearing the mark of prostration. This made me cry. When he sensed my presence, he said, "Bring to me that written document!"

In the said document, he read to me some of the acts of worship of 'Ali ('a). He put it aside and then said with a sigh, "Who can worship like 'Ali ('a)?"(۴)

۵. While in prison Imam al-Kazim(۵) ('a) sometimes was in the state of a single prostration from dawn till noon, so much so that it seemed as if a garment had been spread out on the ground.(۶)

If our infallible personages ('a) were such, always highlighting their shortcomings in worship and uttering "We do not worship You the way You deserve it" {ma 'abadnaka haqqa 'ibadatik}, is there still any room for pride and self-conceit in relation to what we are performing as "worship" {'ibadah}. Since our acts of worship and that of the divine saints are cheese and chalk apart, what should we be proud

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۱- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴۳, p. ۶۱.

۲- Imam Muhammad al-Baqir: the fifth Imam from the Holy Prophet's Progeny. He was born in ۵۷ AH/۶۷۵ CE and spent most of his life in Madinah, until his martydom there in ۱۱۴ AH/۷۳۲ CE. See Baqir Sharif al-Qarashi, The Life of Imam Mohammed al-

{.Baqir, trans. Jasim al-Rasheed (Qum: Ansariyan Publications, ١٩٩٩). {Trans

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴۶, p. ۶۴ -٣

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴۶, p. ٧۵ -۴

Imam Abu'l-Hasan Musa, son of Ja'far: seventh of the Twelve Imams, and - ۵ generally known as Imam Musa al-Kazim. He was born in Madinah in ٧۴۴ CE and died {.in prison in Baghdad in ٧٩٩ CE. {Trans

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴٨, p. ١٠٧ -۶

?of

Invalid acts of worship

We have stated that servitude {'ubudiyyah}, obedience {ita'ah} and worship {'ibadah} deserve to be done to the Creator alone, and any worship of a phenomenon, human being, creature, or any other is invalid. These invalid acts of worship stem more out of ignorance than alienation from the guidance of the .(prophets ('a

In the Glorious Qur'an, God, the Exalted, reckons worship of any other than Him invalid, futile, as well as unreasonable, for, in seeking assistance from others, you ask :from other than God, knowing that all powers belong to Him

(إِنَّ ٱلْقُوَّةَ لِلهِ جَمِيْعًا)

(That power, altogether, belongs to Allah."(١"

If you are seeking honor, be aware that honor also belongs to God and is at His :disposal

(لِلَّهِ الْعِزَّةُ جَمِيعاً)

(Honor entirely belongs to Allah."(٢"

If you are looking for daily provision and sustenance, be it known that the false deities :are not the owners of your sustenance

(لَا یَمْلِکُوْنَ لَکَمْ رِزْقًا)

"(Those whom you worship besides Allah) have no control over your provision."(3)

If you are hoping for gain or refuge from harm from other deities, you should know that they do not have the power to grant any profit nor parry any threat:

(لَایَمْلِکُ لَکُمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا)

"(It) has no power to bring you any benefit or harm."(4)

If you regard the taghuts as superior to you, be reminded that they are also servants of God like you:

(عِبَادٌ أَمْثالُکُم)

"(They) are creatures like you."(5)

If to worship idols means to imitate the ancestors, be wary that they were misguided:

(

۱- Surah al-Baqarah ۲:۱۶۵.

۲- Surah Fatir (or al-Mala'ikah) ۳۵:۱۰.

۳- Surah al-'Ankabut ۲۹:۱۷.

۴- Surah al-Ma'idah ۵:۷۶.

۵- Surah al-A'raf ۷:۱۹۴.

أَنْتُمْ وَ أَبَائُکُمْ فِی ضَلالٍ مُبِیْنٍ)

"You and your forefathers have been in manifest error."(1)

If you think on the Day of Resurrection the deities you worshipped will help, be informed that they shall not take into account your acts of worship, and they shall become your enemies:

(سَيَكْفُرُونَ بِعِبَادَتِهِم وَيَكُونُونَ عَلَيْهِم ضِدًّا)

(No indeed! Soon they will disown their worship, and they will be their opponents.”(۲“

Without any reason and purpose, you resorted to other deities without any basis for :their worship

(وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللهِ مَالَمْ يُنَزِّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا)

(They worship besides Allah that for which He has not sent down any authority.”(۳“

Nobody and nothing is worthy of worship except God. It is because either these false deities don’t exist and are mere figments of the mind, or they are impotent and worthless beings, or, if they ever do anything, it is just temporary, limited and always accompanied by a sense of indebtedness and humiliation. It is thus, not appropriate for a human being to obey them. Man should not serve, obey, adore and submit to any :being if it amounts to disobedience to God. Imam al-Jawad(۴) (‘a) said

مَنْ أَصْغىٰ إِلىٰ نَاطِقٍ فَقَد عَبَدَهُ.

(Anyone who listens to (obeys) the words of another has worshipped him!”(۵“

So, if the one speaking is speaking the truth, we are then true servants, and if he is telling lies, we have then worshipped him futilely. And Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) has said in a :hadith

مَنْ أَطَاعَ مَخْلُوْقًا فِى مَعْصِيَهِ الْخَالِقِ فَقَدْ عَبَدهُ.

Anyone who“

.Surah al-Anbiya’ ۲۱:۵۴ -۱

.Surah Maryam ۱۹:۸۲ -۲

.Surah al-Hajj ۲۲:۷۱ -۳

Imam al-Jawad: Muhammad ibn ‘Ali, the ninth of the Twelve Imams from the - ۴

{.Prophet's Progeny. {Trans

.Tuhaf al-'Uqul, p. ۴۵۶ -۵

(disobeys the Creator by obeying a creature has indeed worshipped the latter."(۱)

As such, invalid worship is not only confined to the worship of stone, wood, the sun and the moon. The attachment of the heart and soul to any ungodly idea, statement, power, and government is false worship. Even the acceptance of profane culture can .also be considered as an example of invalid worship

{Servitude {'ubudiyyah} and not worship {'ibadah

Outward worship and obedience are useless if they are devoid of total submission to, and acceptance of the will of God. A servant is supposed to unconditionally and totally submit to God. He should put aside his personal likes and dislikes while obeying the commands of God and His religion, and not care about the approval or disapproval of others. This absolute and unconditional submission is exactly what is called servitude .{{'ubudiyyah} which is an essential qualification for worship {'ibadah

Notwithstanding all those accounts of worship, since he lacked the spirit of servitude, Iblis (Satan) disobeyed the command of God to bow down before Adam (Adam) ('a) .and was thus expelled from the realm of divine mercy

Arrogance and pride in people, not heeding the call of the prophets ('a) became the reason for their lack of obedience and servitude {'ubudiyyah}, as they wished to :follow their own desires. The Holy Qur'an states

(أَفكُلّمَا جَائكُم رَسُولٌ بِمَا لاَ تَهوىٰ أَنْفُسُكُمُ اسْتَكْبرتُم)

Is it not that whenever an apostle brought you that which was not to your liking, you" (would act arrogantly?"(۲)

:It also states elsewhere

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.Nur ath-Thaqalayn, vol. ۳, p. ۳۵۷ -۱
.Surah al-Baqarah ۲:۸۷ -۲

فَلاَ وَرَبِّكَ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىَ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لاَ يَجِدُواْ فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُواْ تَسْلِيمًا)

But no, by your Lord! They will not believe until they make you a judge in their" disputes, then do not find within their hearts any dissent to your verdict and submit in (full submission."(۱

So, valuable worship is that which stems from servitude {'ubudiyyah}, submission {taslim} and willingness {Rida} of man. Worship means total submission to God with a .complete negation of the self

When the decree for jihad was ordained for the Muslims during the early period of :Islam, some of them questioned it and said

(لَوْلا أَخَّرْتَنَا إِلَى أَجَلٍ قَرِيبٍ)

(Why did You not respite us for a short time?!"(۲"

During the event of the changing of the qiblah {direction of prayer and other rituals} from Bayt al-Muqaddas to the Ka'bah, some asked for the reason behind it. The :Glorious Qur'an answers, thus

(لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَتَّبِعُ الرَّسُوْلَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلىٰ عَقِبَيه)

That We may ascertain those who follow the Apostle from those turn back on their" (heels."(۳

Another perfect example of submission or servitude to God is the story of Ibrahim (Abraham) and Isma'il (Ishmael) ('a). The father submits to the command of God as he brings his son to the appointed place for sacrifice and puts the knife on his son's neck. (The son also submits and says, "O father! Do whatever you are commanded to do."(۴

Ibrahim ('a) is a perfect example of a submissive and obedient servant in his

p: ۲۵

.Surah an-Nisa' ۴:۶۵ -۱

.Surah an-Nisa' ۴:۷۷ -۲

.Surah al-Baqarah ۲:۱۴۳ -۳

.Surah as-Saffat ۳۷:۱۰۲ -۴

willingness to sacrifice Isma'il ('a), in leaving Hajar (Hagar) and Isma'il ('a) alone in the barren desert of Makkah as well as in his readiness to be thrown into the blazing fire .(prepared for him by the people of Nimrud (Nimrod

Constancy in worship

رهروآن نیست که گه تند و گهی خسته رودرهرو آنست که آهسته و پیوسته رود

,To walk does not mean to run and stop intermittently

.To walk means to move slowly but steadily

Constancy and steadfastness in every activity are praiseworthy; the same is true in .the case of worship

Islam considers small but constant acts of worship as more valuable than great, yet .inconsistent, good deeds

:The Glorious Qur'an states

(فَاعْبُدْهُ وَاصْطَبِرْ لِعِبَادَتِهِ)

(So worship Him and be steadfast in His worship."(۱"

:The Messenger of Allah (S) is reported to have said

آفَهُ الْعِبَادَهِ الْفَتْرَهُ.

The greatest danger against worship is sluggishness (while performing it and at" (times neglecting it)."(2)

:And this subject matter has been recorded in many hadiths

إِنَّ أَحَبَّ الأَعْمَالِ إِلَى اللهِ تَعَالَى أَدْوَمُهَا وَ إِنْ قَلَّ.

The most beloved of all deeds in the sight of God is that which is most constant, no" (matter how small it is!"(3)

You have to continue for one whole year whatever activity you start to demonstrate constancy. So, constancy in worship and the spirit of servitude in man are essential. Being sometimes obsessed with worship, supplication and the mosque, and after sometime, abandoning those deeds and becoming totally alien to them is not at all .desirable

Opportunity to engage in worship

The asset of a lifespan and its opportunities shall be taken away

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۱- Surah Maryam ۱۹:۶۵.

۲- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۷۷, p. ۶۸.

۳- Nahj al-Fasahah, Statement ۴۵۳.

and fade just like the passing clouds . One must be wary, make the best use of a :passing opportunity and render service to God. In a beautiful hadith, 'Ali ('a) has said

إِنَّ اللَّيْلَ وَ النَّهَارَ يَعْمَلَانِ فِيكَ فَاعْمَلْ فِيهِمَا وَ يَأْخُذَانِ مِنْكَ فَخُذْ مِنْهُمَا.

The day and night are working in you. You also work in them. They are taking" ((something) from you. You also take (something) from them."(1)

However, we are given life, but are unaware of how we are spending this asset day :and night. Are we making the best use of it? The Messenger of Allah (S) has said

أَلدُّنْيا سَاعَةٌ فَاجعَلُوْهَا طَاعَةً.

"The world is just an hour. Spend it in obedience (to God)."(2)

If under certain circumstances the ground for worship and serving God is limited, one must strive hard to make it broader, go to freer environments and worship God; for, the limitation of time and place is not an excuse for one to keep aloof from the worship of God:

(إِنَّ أَرْضِی وَاسِعَةٌ فَإِیَّیَ فَاعْبُدُونِ)

"My earth is indeed vast. So worship {only} Me."(3)

Enduring difficulties of worship

Worshipping God has accompanying difficulties stemming from the taghuts who create hindrances to prevent people from focusing on God; from the irreligious ones who ridicule the religious ones; from Satan and the carnal soul that strive to obstruct the human being from the worship of God; and other factors that create obstacles.

Were they not annoying the Prophet of Islam (S) when he was praying in the Ka'bah?

Were the combatant Muslims

p: ۲۷

۱- Al-Hayah, vol. ۱, p. ۳۳۱.

۲- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۷۷, p. ۱۶۴.

۳- Surah al-'Ankabut ۲۹:۵۶.

not giving their lives for the sake of the worship of God under the tortures of the taghuts?

Were the likes of Bilal al-Habashi not being whipped in the way of the One True God?

Under no condition or circumstance, whatsoever, did the men of God turn back from God, from His worship, from following His religion. Notwithstanding all those afflictions

and sufferings she experienced, Hadhrat Zaynab(۱) ('a) never missed the supererogatory night prayers along the way from Kufah (in Iraq) to Sham(۲) although, .because of inability, she performed them sitting

During his last night at the hospital, Imam Khomeini (may Allah be pleased with him) .also did not abandon the optional prayers

The path of truth has difficulties that must be overcome by giving one's life and not :being afraid of being hooted or incurring the enmity (of people). 'Ali ('a) said

لاَ تَسْتَوْحِشُوا فِى طَرِيْقِ الْهُدىٰ لِقِلَّهِ أَهْلِهِ.

In the way of truth, you must not be afraid because of the scantiness of its" (followers."(۳

Sometimes, it is possible that because of buying something, taking a meal, or the falling of a load, we insist on stopping the bus, but for prayer, we are reluctant to raise !our voice and ask the bus driver to stop

Promotion of worship

The believer who is devoted to God should engage in promoting the culture of worship. He should not only restrict himself to his own prayer and worship but also acquaint others with God and worship. Exhorting one another to truth and the duty of conveying the message {tabligh} are

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Zaynab al-Kubra': daughter of Imam 'Ali and Hadhrat Fatimah ('a) and sister of -۱ Imams al-Hasan and al-Husayn ('a) who served as the mouthpiece of Imam al-Husayn's revolution after the event of Karbala'. See M.H. Bilgrami, The Victory of Truth: The Life of Zaynab bin 'Ali (Karachi: Zahra Publications Pakistan, ۱۹۸۶), available {.online at http://www.al-islam.org/victory [۱۸]. {Trans

Sham or Shamat: the capital of the Umayyad dynasty. Up until five centuries ago, it -۲ {.included Syria of today, Lebanon and parts of Jordan and Palestine. {Trans

.Nahj al-Balaghah (Faydh al-Islam), Sermon ۱۹۲ -۳

incumbent upon every believer. God calls on man, after faith and righteous deeds, to exhort one another to truth, and exhort one another to patience and the truth:

(وَ تَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَ تَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ)

"(۱)And enjoin one another to {follow} the truth, and enjoin one another to patience."(

If ten smokers inhabit a community, many people will become familiar with smoking within a short period. The presence of only a few corrupt elements is enough to corrupt an entire city. Why cannot a number of faithful worshippers then acquaint the people with God and make the environment congenial for the worship of God?

With utmost effort, at home, school, office, city, and village, we must plan for the advancement of our own divine objectives, and put into action whatever we can along this path.

Duty and its conditions

point

After dealing with the importance of worship and the dangers threatening it, one must know the conditions necessary for worship.

Having duty {taklif} is considered as man's great distinction. Man is the recipient of divine grace and, thereby, obliged {mukallaf} to perform certain duties as God's vicegerent on earth. This honorable distinction must be celebrated by him.

One of the 'ulama' always used to celebrate the anniversary of his attainment of puberty {bulugh}, saying: "On this day, I assumed responsibility to perform divine duties!"

Just as people felicitate someone on his election to the presidency and the parliament, or appointment as minister, etc. because the public honor him with a responsibility, the day of attainment of puberty and acceptance of responsibility set

.Surah al-'Asr ۱۰۳:۳ -۱

.by God is also a blessed and auspicious day

Now, we shall briefly point out the conditions of the assumption of this responsibility :or duty

{Puberty {bulugh .۱

On reaching their ۱۵th and ۹th lunar year respectively, boys and girls attain the age of (responsibility. Of course, sons might attain maturity prior to the stated ages.(۱

There are also other types of maturity {bulugh} apart from this one in terms of worship and responsibility, the performance of what is obligatory and refraining from what is forbidden. For example, there is "political maturity," which includes intellectual growth, an awareness of the political concerns of society, correct political thought, .and obedience shown to deserving leaders

Qasim, son of Imam al-Mujtaba ('a), who was martyred in Karbala' said to his uncle, the infallible Imam of the time (Imam al-Husayn ('a)): "If the government is in the hands of a taghut like Yazid,(۲) death in the way of fighting against him is sweeter .than honey for me." This implies his political maturity

Economic maturity" means the understanding of the proper utilization of wealth, be it" :his own or that of others. The Holy Qur'an states

Turn over the wealth of the orphans (to them) when you feel that they have attained " (enough maturity to reasonably spend it in business, trade and the like."(۳

Marital maturity" expects both the man and woman, apart from attaining maturity in" terms of assumption of responsibility, to have acquired the capability of managing their lives and performing the corresponding duties, for, in this

.For its explanation, see Imam Khomeini, Tawdhih al-Masa'il, Issue ۲۲۵۲ -۱

Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah: (۲۶-۶۲ AH) succeeded his father to occupy the office of the -۲ Caliphate in the year ۶۰ AH. He was a young man devoid of knowledge and virtues and was well known for his debauchery and other vices. Yazid ruled for three and a half years. During his first year he killed Imam al-Husayn('a) and his votaries at Karbala' and made the latter's surviving kith and kin captives. In his second year as Caliph, he ransacked Madinah (the seat of the Prophet's rule and his burial site), and in his third {.year of rule he invaded Makkah. {Trans

Surah an-Nisa' ۴:۶: "Then, if ye find them of sound judgment, deliver over unto them -۳ ".their fortune

.issue mere physical maturity and legal age are not enough

Some reminders

a) We have said that puberty {bulugh} is a requisite of responsibility, but this does not mean that those who have not yet attained maturity are totally exempted. In some cases, the Glorious Qur'an also addresses the young, giving orders to them. For instance, they are not supposed to enter a house or room without permission, and must take permission before entering a room at the private resting time of their (parents.(۱

:And also, Hadhrat Luqman thus commands his son

(يَا بُنَىَّ أَقِمِ الصَّلوٰةَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَانْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ)

(O my son! Maintain the prayer and bid what is right and forbid what is wrong."(۲"

b) Although puberty is a requisite for accountability, parents are nevertheless supposed to acquaint their children prior to puberty with the religious rites and traditions, such as prayer and fasting. Sometimes, they are advised to punish them with the aim of showing their seriousness and the dire consequence of neglecting .prayers and other duties

c) Puberty is a requisite for accountability, but if a young person causes financial

damage to someone, his parents should provide compensation, because .accountability to people is separate from the accountability to God

d) Maturity is a requisite for accountability, but young people have rewards for their good deeds yet, if they commit a mistake, say something unpleasant, or do something .bad, there is punishment for them

Strength .۲

Strength and capability are requisites for accountability. Anyone who is incapable of performing a certain task is

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۱- Surah an-Nur ۲۴:۵۸: "O you who have faith! Let your permission be sought by your slaves and those of you who have not reached puberty three times: before the dawn prayer, and when you put off your garments at noon, and after the night prayer. ".These are three times of privacy for you

۲- Surah Luqman ۳۱:۱۷.

not accountable for it. Concerning the divine duties, this parameter of strength is also :observed. God thus says

(لَا نُكَلِّفُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا)

"We task no soul except according to its capacity."(۱)

:The Qur'an also states

(مَا جَعَلَ اللهُ عَلَيكُم فِى الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ)

"He has chosen you and has not placed for you any obstacle (as well as pressure and (difficulty) in religion."(۲)

This refers to pressure beyond man's capacity, for religiosity also has corresponding .pressure and struggle

Even in the case of jihad, which entails broader predicaments and difficulties, the Qur'an does not include the sick, infirm and blind as well as other individuals who are (incapable of performing jihad.(۳

{Freewill {ikhtiyar .۳

If someone is compelled to commit a certain sinful act, or hindered by force from fulfilling a certain duty, he cannot be called to account. It means that a requisite of fulfilling an obligation is freewill {ikhtiyar} and freedom of action. Under compulsion and in an emergency, the verdict about a certain issue is different. An example is the case when a taghuti places hindrances in the way of a Muslim's performance of the Hajj pilgrimage, or the case of someone who is dying of hunger and no food is .available for him except a human corpse

{Intellect {'aql .۴

Intellect {'aql} and common sense {shu'ur} are the criteria of man's maturity and his duty. Accountability, liability and responsibility are also undertaken on the basis of one's level of intellect, and those who lack intellect have no obligation and as such, no .punishment or reward

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.Surah al-An'am ۶:۱۵۲ -۱

.Surah al-Hajj ۲۲:۷۸ -۲

Surah al-Fath ۴۸:۱۷: "There is no blame for the blind, nor is there blame for the lame, -۳ ".(nor is there blame for the sick (that they go not forth to war

In some Prophetic traditions, the intellect has been reckoned as the first created entity and true servitude {'ubudiyyah} as emanating from the intellect. And in the books on hadith, the discussion about the intellect has come first compared to other (subjects.(۱

In Islam, anything that befogs the mind (such as alcoholic beverages) is unlawful {haram} and anything that enhances the intellect and understanding is encouraged

.such as teaching, learning, research, traveling, consultation, etc

Conditions for the soundness of worship

The value of worship lies in its soundness and correctness, which depend on two key factors: (١) soundness of the purpose, and (٢) soundness of its form.

Let us deal first with the "purpose". Seeking divine pleasure and attempting to perform one's duty must be of man's purpose in worship. Therefore, an act of worship which is performed with ostentation {riya'}, or is meant to win people's attention and approval, or performed with the expectation of praise from one other than God, is tantamount to the commission of polytheism {shirk}. Of course, if people take notice of someone's sincere work, there is nothing wrong with that.(٢)

In addition to its being unlawful {haram}, ostentation in worship also renders it invalid. One must strive hard so that the pure intention for worship is not mixed with ungodly motives. Regarding sincerity in action, Imam as-Sadiq ('a) has said:

وَ الْعَمَلُ الْخَالِصُ الَّذِى لَا تُرِيْدُ أَنْ يحَمَدك عَلَيْهِ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا الله.

"And the sincere deed is that you do not expect any appreciation and eulogy from anyone except God."(٣)

On the effects of sincerity, the Messenger

١- For example, see Usul al-Kafi, Al-Wafi and Bihar al-Anwar.

٢- Tafsir Safi, vol. ٢, p. ٣٥.

٣- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ٧٠, p. ٢٣٠.

of Allah (S) is reported to have said:

مَا أَخْلَصَ عَبْدٌ لله عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ أَرْبَعِيْنَ صَبَاحًا إِلَّا جَرَتْ يَنَابِيعُ الْحِكْمَهِ مِنْ قَلْبِهِ إِلَى لِسَانِهِ.

"There is no servant of Allah, the Glorious and Dignified, who sincerely worships Him

(for forty days without having springs of wisdom flow from his heart to his tongue."(1)

Sincerity is an academy that produces sages and men of wisdom after a period of forty days.

Let us now deal with "the form of worship."

An act of worship is correct when it is performed in exactly the same form, method and manner as specified by God and ortodox teaching, and not according to personal whims or manners contrary to the dictates of religion.

The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

لاَ قَول وَ لاَ عَمَل وَ لاَ نِيّه إِلاَ بِإِصَابَهِ السُّنَّهِ.

"No saying, action or intention is valuable unless it is done according to the sunnah."(2)

So, the form of worship must also be learned from the holy saints {awliya'}. Hadhrat Ibrahim ('a) beseeches God to show to him the correct form of worship:

(وَأَرِنَا مَنَاسِكَنَا)

"And show us our rites {of worship}."(3)

One must faithfully observe the commands for the prayer to be shortened {qasr} or performed in full {tamam}, the recitation in prayer must be loud or silent, the number of rak'ahs, and the like, otherwise it will have no value at all.

The same is true if it is said that there is a hidden treasure a 100 steps away, which you may posses, if you take 98 or 102 steps, you

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1- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 70, p. 242.

2- Qassar al-Jamal, vol. 2, p. 73.

3- Surah al-Baqarah 2: 128.

.will not possess it and your efforts will be useless

Similarly, if you want to contact a certain person or a municipality by phone, by dialing one digit more or less, you will be connected to another person or another municipality. So, in worship the form which is commanded must be strictly followed. It is like the grooves of a key, which if they become a little too fine or rough, will no .longer open a lock

On the interpretation of verse {ayah} ۱۸۹ of Surah al-Baqarah, “And come into houses from their doors,” Imam al-Baqir (‘a) said: “It means that you have to perform an act (according to its command.”(۱

Motives behind changing the form of worship

point

The Holy Qur’an cites numerous cases on how the past communities incurred divine wrath and chastisement by changing the form of worship. The motive behind this change has assumed diverse forms. We shall mention an example from the Qur’an :for each of these cases

Changing the form out of obduracy .۱

God commanded the Children of Israel {Bani isra’il} to utter the word “hattah” (which means, “O God forgive us and wipe off our sins”) at the time of entrance to the holy land. Out of derision and obduracy, they changed it and instead said, “hantah” (which (means “wheat”). God vented His wrath upon them and brought them to perdition.(۲

Changing the form out of false enlightenment .۲

In Islam, four months are deemed sacred {haram} in which waging war is forbidden. The imposed ceasefire covers three successive months, namely, Dhu’l-Qa‘dah, Dhu’l-Hijjah and Muharram, and one separate month (Rajab) which have been described as a whole by

1- Al-Mizan, vol. 2, p. 59.

2- Surah al-Baqarah 2:59: "But the wrongdoers changed the saying with other than what they were told. So We sent down on those who were wrongdoers a plague from the sky because of the transgressions they used to commit."

the Holy Qur'an as the "four sacred (months)" {arba'atun hurum}(1) in which fighting is prohibited except in the form of defense.

Out of their personal desire and false enlightenment, some people used to interchange these months, setting them in advance or otherwise, and saying: "What is the difference? The point is that every year, we should not wage war for four months." The Glorious Qur'an condemned this changing of the sacred months, regarding it as a sign of unbelief {kufr}.(2)

3. Changing the form out of sanctimony

It refers to the work of those who, under the garb of religion and religious ruses, want to satisfy their carnal desires, and by means of this, they wish to relieve their conscience and circumvent the laws of God. An example of this can be found in the historical account of the Children of Israel.

Since God had forbidden them to catch fish on the Sabbath, they constructed small pools near the body of water in which they placed the fishes caught a day before, and took them the next day saying, "We have not caught fishes on the Sabbath!"

This event has been described and condemned in some verses of the Holy Qur'an.(3)

Conditions for the acceptance of acts worship

point

Apart from their correctness, acts of worship have conditions for their "acceptance" and "perfection". It means that by observing them man will attain nearness to Allah, spiritual growth and influence individual as well as society.

Sometimes, an act of worship is correct but does not lead to spiritual growth, just like

.a medicine which does not heal the patient

,At times

p: ۳۶

Surah at-Tawbah (or, Bara‘ah) ۹:۳۶: “Of these, four are sacred. That is the upright -۱ religion. So do not wrong yourselves during them. Fight all the polytheists, just as they ”.fight you all

Surah at-Tawbah (or, Bara‘ah) ۹:۳۷: “Indeed nasi is an increase in unfaith, whereby -۲ the faithless are led {further} astray. They allow it in one year and forbid it another year, so as to fit in with the number which Allah has made inviolable, thus permitting ”.what Allah has forbidden

For instance, see Surah al-A‘raf ۷:۱۶۳: “Ask them about the town that was situated -۳ on the seaside, when they violated the Sabbath, when their fish would come to them on the Sabbath day, visibly on the shore, but on days when they were not keeping Sabbath they would not come to them. Thus did We test them because of the ”.transgressions they used to commit

an act of worship relieves us from the punishment (of abandoning it) but does not .make us beloved of God

The conditions for the acceptance of deeds and acts of worship have been stated in (Qur’anic verses and Prophetic traditions. Some of them are the following:(۱

;Ideological condition .۱

;Political condition .۲

;Moral condition .۳

;Economic condition .۴

;Social condition .۵

.Familial condition .۶

Before explaining the above, it must be emphasized that man should strive hard for the acceptance of his acts of worship and to benefit from his spiritual endeavors. 'Ali (a) said:

كُونُوا عَلىٰ قَبُوْلِ الْعَمَلِ أَشَدَّ عِنَايَةً مِنْكُمْ عَلَىٰ الْعَمَلِ.

"Pay more attention to the acceptance of the act than you do to the act itself."(٢)

For acceptance in a certain position, a person may possibly be required to acquire an entrance card and to act according to the apparent rules, but in the interview he will be rejected for reasons such as moral corruption, bad record, etc. It is also possible for the act of worship to have been performed properly according to the divine rules, but it will not be accepted by God for certain reasons. Is it not sometimes observed that correct works done by unauthorized persons, instead of being appreciated are criticized?! Why? Because acceptance depends on certain conditions which shall now be discussed.

١. Ideological condition: Faith in God

Lack of faith {iman} renders deeds futile:

(وَمَن يَكْفُرْ بِالإِيمَانِ فَقَدْ حَبِطَ عَمَلُهُ)

"Should anyone renounce his faith, his work shall fail."(٣)

Those who build the mosques of God should be believers in God and the hereafter:

(إِنَّمَا يَعْمُرُ

١- I do express my appreciation to my dear brother Hujjat al-Islam Aqa Wahidi who gave me the idea of this classification.

٢- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ٧١, p. ١٧٣.

٣- Surah al-Ma'idah ٥:٥.

مَسَاجِدَ اللهِ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللهِ وَ الْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ)

"Only those shall maintain Allah's mosques who believe in Allah and the Last Day."(1)

And it is the righteous deed of a believing {mu'min} man and woman that brings about pure life:

(مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّن ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنثَى وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهُ حَيَاةً طَيِّبَةً)

"Whoever acts righteously, {whether} male or female, should he (or she) be faithful—We shall revive him with a good life."(2)

Anyone who denies God has performed no deed for which he should expect reward. The Holy Qur'an regards the deeds of unbelievers just like ashes that will be blown by the wind on a windy day, and thus, nothing will be left of them.

۲. Political condition: Guardianship {wilayah}

Correct and divinely ordained guardianship {wilayah} directs all the servants of God, acts of servitude (to Him), prayer, Hajj pilgrimage, jihad and others, along the divine path. It is like Iran which today, having the guardianship of the jurist {wilayah al-faqih}, is progressing. On the contrary, other Muslim countries, notwithstanding the observance of prayers, fasting and others therein, are in an abject state due to incorrect leadership.

The leader of society is like the driver of a vehicle. If all the passengers are smart, neat and courteous but the driver is drunk or the way is altered, mishap is in the offing. But if the driver is morally sound and well-experienced, no matter if all the passengers are old-fashioned and untidy, this journey will end at its destination.

In a hadith, Imam al-Baqir ('a) is reported to

۱- Surah at-Tawbah (or, Bara'ah) ۹:۱۸.

۲- Surah an-Nahl ۱۶:۹۷.

have said:

.have said

مَنْ دَانَ اللَّه بِعِبَادَةٍ يَجْهَدُ فيهَا نَفْسَهُ وَ لاَ إِمَامَ لَهُ مِنَ اللهِ فَسَعيُهُ غَيْرَ مَقْبُوْلٍ.

Anyone who has faith in God and also performs onerous acts of worship, but has no" deserving Imam from Allah, his efforts are useless."(1)

If the divinely ordained leader had been allowed to rule, the worship of God would not have led to the worship of the taghut; the heavenly laws would not have turned into superstitions; the Friday congregational prayers, in all their splendor, would not have been conducted for the interest of the taghuts; and the Hajj—this manifestation of the power and honor of Islam and the Muslims—would not have been transformed .into something unproductive or for the advantage of rulers alien to Islam

:We read in a hadith

فَمَنْ لَمْ يَتَوَّلنَا لَمْ يَرْفَعِ اللهُ لَهُ عَمَلاً.

Whoever shall not accept our guardianship {wilayah} (and leadership), his deeds also" shall not be accepted by God."(2)

Hadhrat 'Ali ('a) said: "We are the "door of Allah" {bab Allah} and the way of Allah will be introduced and known through us."(3)

So, wilayah is a condition for the acceptance of acts of worship. Along with it, there :must also be God-wariness {taqwa}. Imam al-Baqir ('a) said

وَ مَا تَنَالُ وَ لاَ يَتنَا إِلاَّ بِالْعَمَلِ وَ الْوَرَعِ.

There is nothing in the line of our leadership except (good) deeds and piety {wara" '}."(4)

{Moral condition: God-wariness {taqwa .3

The story of the two sons of Adam (Adam) ('a) is recorded in the Glorious Qur'an. Both of them offered sacrifices. The sacrifice offered by one of

.Wasa’il ash-Shi‘ah, vol. ۱, p. ۹۰ -۱

.Al-Kafi, vol. ۱, p. ۴۳۰ -۲

.Al-Kafi, vol. ۱, pp. ۱۴۵, ۱۹۳ -۳

.Al-Kafi, vol. ۲, p. ۷۵; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۷۱, p. ۱۸۷ -۴

.them was accepted while that of the other was not

:God says

(إِنَّمَا يَتَقَبَّلُ اللّهُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِينَ)

)Allah accepts only from the God-wary.”(۱“

It has been narrated that upon entering the market, a certain person stole two loaves of bread and two pomegranates. He then gave the two loaves of bread and the two ”?pomegranates to the poor. He was asked: “What kind of work is this

He answered: “God gives one punishment for every sin committed but ten rewards for every good deed done. By stealing those two loaves of bread and two pomegranates, I committed four sins, but since I gave the same to the poor, I have gained forty rewards. If four sins are subtracted from forty rewards, thirty six rewards will ”.remain

It was said to him: “Ten times the reward is for the one who does good deeds on the basis of God-wariness {taqwa}. Spending stolen or usurped property in God’s way has no reward. Have you not read, “Innama yataqabbal Allahu min al-muttaqin” ”!?{{Verily, God accepts only those who are God-wary

Economic condition: Giving people their rights .۴

Addressing the needs and rights of the deprived occupies such a degree of importance that sometimes the acceptability of the act of worship depends upon it. Paying the poor-rate {zakat}(۲) and earning a lawful income are some examples.

:Imam ar-Rida ('a) says

مَنْ صَلّیٰ وَ لَمْ یُزَکِّ لَمْ تُقْبَلْ صَلوٰتُه.

The prayer of one who prays but does not give zakat (and other Islamic taxes) shall" not be accepted."(3)

In another hadith, 'Ali ('a) says to Kumayl: "When your

p: 40

1- Surah al-Ma'idah 5:27.
2- Zakah: the tax levied on various categories of wealth and spent on the purposes specified in Surah at-Tawbah 9:60. {Trans.}
3- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 96,p. 12.

food is not acquired through lawful {halal} earning, God will also not accept your glorification {tasbih} and thanks-giving."(1)

5. Social condition: Wishing others well

The preservation of society, brotherhood, and a wholesome relationship among Muslims, are of the utmost importance. There fore any saying or action that disrupts good relationships is prohibited. Backbiting {ghiybah}, suspicion {su'i zann}, malevolence, severance of ties, peevishness and envy are some of the vices and actions that cause the non-acceptance of worship.

:The Messenger of Allah (S) said

مَنِ اغْتَابَ مُسْلِمًا أَوْ مُسْلِمَةً لَمْ یَقْبَلِ اللهُ صَلاَتَهُ وَ لاَ صِیَامَهُ أَرْبَعِیْنَ یَوْمًا وَ لَیْلَةً إِلاَّ أَنْ یَغْفِرَ لَهُ صَاحِبُهُ.

The prayers and the fasting for forty days of one who backbites against a Muslim" man or woman are not accepted unless the victim (the person backbitten) concerned forgives him."(2)

:The Prophet (S) also said

يَا أَبَاذَرّ! إِيَّاکَ وَهِجْرَانَ أَخِيْکَ، فَإِنَّ لْعَمَلَ لاَ يَتَقَبَّلُ مَعَ لْهِجْرانِ.

O Abu Dharr! Keep aloof from severing ties with your brother in faith as the deeds of"
the ones doing so are not accepted."(۳)

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) said:

لاَ يَقْبَلُ اللهُ مِنْ مُؤْمِنٍ عَمَلاً وَ هُوَ مُضْمِرٌ عَلىٰ أَخِيْهِ سُوء.

God does not accept the deeds of any believer who has bad intentions against his"
brother in faith."(۴)

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) also said:

إِنَّ سُوءَ لْخُلْقِ يُفْسِدُ لْعَمَلَ كَمَا يُفْسِدُ الخَلُّ لْعَسَلَ.

Verily, bad behavior (toward the people) spoils (good) deeds just as vinegar spoils"
honey."(۵)

In conclusion, speaking ill of others, bad intentions against others, severing ties of friendship, backbiting and the like which weaken the social bonds of Muslims, are considered among the obstacles

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۱- Safinah al-Bahar, vol. ۱, under the word, "hall".
۲- Jami' as-Sa'adat, vol. ۲, p. ۲۳۴.
۳- Makarim al-Akhlaq, p. ۵۵۴ (as quoted in Al-Hayah, vol. ۱, p. ۲۳۶).
۴- Usul al-Kafi, vol. ۲, p. ۳۶۱.
۵- Usul al-Kafi, vol. ۲, p. ۳۲۱.

to the acceptance of worship. Therefore, supplicants and worshippers should have a firm religious relationship with the servants of God so that their acts of worship might become worthy of acceptance.

۶. Familial condition: Good behavior

Islam establishes a strong interconnection between devotion, politics, morality, and society. In family affairs, it regards as important the observance of mutual respect and rights between the husband and wife so much so that inattention to them may sometimes lead to the non-acceptance of worship. The severance of earthly ties leads to the severance of heavenly ties. In this regard, the Prophet of Islam (S) has :said

مَنْ كَانَ لَهُ إِمْرَأَةٌ تُؤذيهِ لَمْ يُقْبَلِ اللهُ صَلاَتَهَا وَ لاَ حَسَنَةً مِنْ عَمَلِهَا... وَ عَلَىٰ الرَّجُل مِثْلُ ذٰلِكَ.

God does not accept the prayers and good deeds of an ill-mannered and annoying“ (wife... And the same is true if the husband is such.”(1

Not only does uncivil behavior toward one’s spouse hinder the acceptance of worship, but also casting a furious look at one’s father or mother, as said by Imam as-Sadiq :(‘a)

مَنْ نَظَرَ إِلَىٰ أَبَويهِ نَظَرَ مَاقِتٍ وَ هُمَا ظَالِمَانِ لَهُ لَمْ يُقْبَلِ اللهُ لَهُ صَلاةً.

The prayer of the one who looks furiously at his father or mother is not accepted“ (even though his parents have treated him unjustly.”(2

For, once we are in the state of prayer, we are actually in spiritual ascension {mi‘raj} provided that its edifices are firmly established on the ground. However, if they are situated on slippery or soft ground, going up becomes problematic and at

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۱- Wasa’il ash-Shi‘ah, vol. ۱۴, p. ۱۱۶.

۲- Usul al-Kafi, vol, ۲, p. ۳۴۹.

times, impossible. Spiritual perfection under the aegis of worship also emanates from good behavior and wholesome social relationships.

Habits such as drinking liquor, gambling, eating what has been prohibited and others, which have been mentioned in the Prophetic traditions, also hinder the acceptance of

good deeds. However, it must not be imagined that since God does not accept them, one should not pray and fast, etc. Rather, these examples point out what weakens deeds and decreases their value on account of the untoward behavior and character .of the worshipper

Signs of acceptance

The Holy Qur'an regards the rejection of obscenity and vices as the fruit of prayer —"Indeed the prayer prevents indecencies and wrongs"(١)—and this virtue is the .essence of prayer and a sign of its acceptance and other acts of worship

:In expressing this sign, Imam as-Sadiq ('a) thus said

مَنْ أَحَبَّ أَنْ يَعْلَمَ أقُبِلَت صَلاَتَهُ أَمْ لَم تُقْبَلْ، فَلْيَنْظُر هَلْ مَنَعَتْهُ صَلاَتُهُ عَنِ الْفحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ؟ فَبِقَدرَ مَا ضَعَتْهُ قُبِلَتْ مِنْهُ.

Anyone who wants to know whether his prayer is accepted or not should see if his" prayer is keeping him away from sin and indecency. So, the degree of acceptance of his prayer is commensurate with the power his prayer has in keeping him away from (sin."(٢

Conditions for the perfection of worship

point

Besides the conditions for the correctness and acceptance of worship, there are other conditions which relate to the perfection {kamal} of worship, which indicate the higher value, better substance and greater impact of worship. These conditions are :the following

Making greater effort .١

Performance of easy tasks and acts of worship

.Surah al-'Ankabut ۲۹:۴۵ -١

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۲, p. ۱۹۸ -۲

can be undertaken by everybody, but an act of worship which is more difficult and necessitates more dedication, effort and endeavor is more valuable and nearer to perfection. The Holy Qur'an praises those who assisted and obeyed the Messenger of Allah (S) during tortuous circumstances.(١)

Imam al-Mujtaba ('a), in spite of having a riding animal, used to travel by foot in performing the Hajj so as to gain a greater reward. The Glorious Qur'an praises those who perform the night supererogatory prayers by leaving their soft, warm beds so as to engage in supplication and prayer.(٢)

Imam 'Ali ('a) has said:

أَفْضَلُ الأَعْمَالِ مَا أَكْرَهْتَ نَفْسَكَ عَلَيْهِ.

"The best of deeds is that in which you have to urge yourself to perform it."(٣)

The Holy Qur'an regards as superior the reward and station of great and diligent mujahidin,(٤) stating thus:

(وَفَضَّلَ اللّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا)

"And Allah has graced those who wage jihad over those who sit back with a great reward."(٥)

٢. Concentrating on what is more important

In the performance of works, paying attention to "what is important and what is more important" is an indication of intellect, foresightedness and purposefulness, and Islam encourages the performance of works which are more in need, more useful and more important, be it in the realm of education, worship, spending money in Allah's cause {infaq}, etc. The Prophet of Islam (S) has said:

لاَ صَدَقَةَ وَ ذُوْرَحِمٍ مُحْتَاجًا.

"While there are needy relatives, spending on and helping others is worthless."(٦)

And Imam 'Ali ('a) said:

لَا قُرْبَه بِالنَّوَافِلِ إِذَا أَضرَّتْ بِالْفَرَائِضِ.

Whenever supererogatory prayers jeopardize obligatory“

p: ۴۴

Surah at-Tawbah (or, Bara‘ah) ۹:۱۱۷: “Certainly Allah turned clemently to the - ۱ Prophet and the Emigrants and the Helpers, who followed him in the hour of ”.difficulty

Surah as-Sajdah ۳۲:۱۶: “Their sides vacate their beds to supplicate their Lord in fear -۲ ”.and hope, and they spend out of what We have provided them

.Qassar al-Jamal, vol. ۲, p. ۷۴ -۳

Mujahidin (sing. mujahid): those who struggle in the way of God for the attainment -۴ {.of God’s purposes on earth; those who perform jihad. {Trans

.Surah an-Nisa’ ۴:۹۵ -۵

.Nahj al-Fasahah, Statement ۵۲۲ -۶

(prayers, they will not bring about nearness to God.”(۱

Concentrating on what has lasting value .۳

The impact of a deed and act of worship which has the quality of perfection is not .fleeting and temporary but of permanent value

:Imam ‘Ali (‘a) says

رُبَّ يَسيرٍ اَنْمیٰ مِنْ كَثيرٍ.

So many seemingly small and trivial deeds are more fruitful than a large amount of“ (deeds.”(۲

Some writings, outstanding works and service centers are blessed with amazing influence and power that so many writings, works and institutions lack. It shows that .being blessed is also a sign of achieving perfection in devotional acts

(Acting in accordance with the Sunnah of the Prophet (S .۴

The perfection of deeds and acts of worship is achieved when it toes such actions are in accordance with the Sunnah of the Prophet (S) and the holy saints, and not based on inherited popular communal rituals or traditions. The nearer the worship is to the .method of the Infallibles ('a), the more valuable it is

Having precedence in meritorious works .۵

Precedence has value in acts of worship and good deeds, and preeminence in such affairs is the criterion of perfection. The Holy Qur'an in many instances uses the :order, "sari'u" and "sabiqu" {be ahead}. It states elsewhere

(وَمَا لَكُمْ أَلَّا تُنفِقُوا فِى سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلِلَّهِ مِيرَاثُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَا يَسْتَوِى مِنكُم مَّنْ أَنفَقَ مِن قَبْلِ الْفَتْحِ وَقَاتَلَ أُوْلَئِكَ أَعْظَمُ دَرَجَةً مِّنَ الَّذِينَ أَنفَقُوا مِن بَعْدُ وَقَاتَلُوا وَكُلًّا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْحُسْنَى وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ)

Why should you not spend in the way of Allah, while to Allah belongs the heritage of" the heavens and the earth? Not equal {to others} are those of

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۱- .Al-Hayah, vol. ۱, p. ۳۱۸

۲- .Nahj al-Balaghah, Saying ۳۱

you who spent and fought before the victory. They are greater in rank than those who have spent and fought afterward. Yet Allah has promised the best reward to each and Allah is well aware of what you do."(۱)

So, having precedence in meritorious works (such as spending and jihad in the way of :Allah) is one of the criteria of perfection. We read in a hadith that 'Ali ('a) said

لَا يتمّ المعروفُ إلاّ بثلاثِ خصالٍ: تعجيلهُ و تصغيرهُ وَ سترهُ.

A good deed becomes more valuable if it is done immediately; the doer regards it as" something small (and as such he does not become proud of it), and does it quietly without expecting anything in return."(۲)

Therefore, the best prayer is that which is offered at its first call; the more it is

delayed, the lower its merit. The adhan {call to prayer} clearly invites: "Come to prayer; come to success; come to the best of deeds {hayya 'ala's-salah; hayya 'ala'l-falah; hayya 'ala khayr al-'amal}!"

۶. Performing devotional acts under difficult circumstances

As it demands more sacrifices and has a far-reaching impact, the good and devotional act performed in an atmosphere dominated by tyrants and taghuts is more valuable. Since the pressures of the external environment and natural instincts tend to obstruct worship and servitude to God, overcoming these pressures and worshipping God are signposts of value and perfection. In praising the upright believers, the Glorious Qur'an states:

(يُجَاهِدُونَ فِى سَبِيلِ اللّهِ وَلاَ يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةَ لآئِمٍ)

"Wage jihad in the way of Allah, not fearing the blame

۱- Surah al-Hadid ۵۷:۱۰.
۲- Qassar al-Jamal, vol. ۲, p. ۳۰.

of any blamer."(۱)

It also states in another place:

(الَّذينَ يُبَلِّغُونَ رِسالاتِ اللّهِ وَ يَخْشَوْنَهُ وَ لا يَخْشَوْنَ أَحَدًا إِلاَّ اللّهَ وَ كَفى بِاللّهِ حَسيبًا)

"Such as deliver the messages of Allah and fear Him, and fear no one except Allah, and Allah suffices as reckoner."(۲)

Yes, those who safeguard themselves and their religion (such as the wife of Pharaoh) under the dominance of an oppressor, occupy a loftier station.

۷. Fervor and Constancy

The lack of fervor in worship is a sign of hypocrisy {nifaq}. The Holy Qur'an

denounces the lack of enthusiasm of the hypocrites {munafiqun}.(۳) On the contrary, enthusiasm and constancy in worship generates spiritual perfection {kamal}.

In the hadiths, a small number of deeds which are constant and regular are considered better than a large quantity of devotional acts which are accompanied by laziness, ennui and abandonment. The Glorious Qur'an promises rewards and abundant good fortune in the field of knowledge and understanding to those who are firmly entrenched on the right path.

(وَ أَن لَوِ اسْتَقَمُواْ عَلَى الطَّرِيقَهِ لَأَسْقَيْنَهُم مَّآءً غَدَقًا)

"If they are steadfast on the path {of Allah}, We shall provide them with abundant water."(۴)

۸. Humility

Arrogant people regard their acts of worship as great and significant where by they spoil their acts of worship. Whereas the condition for the perfection of worship is that the worshipper should not reckon his devotional acts as plentiful and be arrogant. In the Makarim al-Akhlaq supplication, Imam as-Sajjad ('a) thus pleads with God:

أَللّهمّ عَبِّدْنى لَکَ وَ لاَ تُفْسِدْ عِبَادَتِى بِالْعُجْبِ.

"O my Lord! Let me

۱- Surah al-Ma'idah ۵:۵۴.

۲- Surah al-Ahzab ۳۳:۳۹.

۳- Surah an-Nisa' ۴:۱۴۲: "When they stand up to worship they perform it languidly and to be seen of men, and are mindful of Allah but little."

۴- Surah al-Jinn ۷۲:۱۶.

be Your servant but do not contaminate my devotion {'ibadah} with self-conceit {'ujb}."(۱)

There are many hadiths which exhort man not to consider as great his devotions and good deeds. The Qur'an mentions the abundant worship and glorification {tasbih} of angels as well as their remembrance {dhikr} of God.(۲) Perhaps, the purpose behind this is to discourage the servants of God on earth from being proud of a few rak'ahs of prayer and worship.

۹. Possessing insight

Profound awareness and insight in religion is the most valuable attribute of deeds and devotional acts, without which no work can achieve perfection. Imam 'Ali ('a) says:

أَلاَ، لاَ خَيرَ فِی عِبَادَهٍ لَيْسَ فِيْهَا تَفَكُّرٌ.

"Worship without insight and reflection is indeed worthless."(۳)

In another hadith, "certainty" {yaqin} is mentioned as follows:

إِنَّ الْعَمَلَ الدَّائم الْقَلِيْل عَلىٰ الْيَقِيْنِ، أَفْضَلُ عِنْدَ اللهِ مِنَ الْعَمَل الْكَثِيرِ عَلىٰ غيرِ يَقِينٍ.

"Verily, small yet constant works based on certainty {yaqin} are superior in the sight of God to many works without certainty (and insight)."(۴)

Let us suffice ourselves with this in explaining the conditions for attaining perfection in deeds and worship.

Philosophy of worship

All Islamic laws and traditions of worship possess wisdom and philosophy:

Firstly, in line with hundreds of Qur'anic verses and hadiths that call on the people to reflect and think, and no school of thought has invited the people to think as much as Islam has done.

Secondly, one of the strong criticisms of the Qur'an against the polytheists and idol-worshippers is their blind and unreasonable imitation of their ancestors.

Thirdly, the Qur'an itself has also mentioned the laws and

۱- {Trans. ۲۰ As-Sahifah as-Sajjadiyyah, Supplication.}

۲- Surah al-Anbiya' ۲۱:۲۰: "They glorify (Him) night and day; they flag not."

۳- Usul al-Kafi, vol. ۱, p. ۳۶.

۴- Usul al-Kafi, vol. ۱, p. ۵۷.

commands many times along with the reasons behind them. The infallible Imams ('a) have also cited in the hadiths the wisdom behind these laws and commands. Some Muslim scholars have also written books regarding this subject.(۱)

In addition, with the advancement of human knowledge some of the secrets of divine laws and religious commands are being unveiled day by day, and with the passage of time the grandeur and image of Islam will be enhanced.

In view of all the above points, it must be noted that:

۱. It is not necessary that all the people in all eras should know the wisdom behind all laws. Sometimes, the reason behind some of them is presently unclear but as time goes on, it will become clear.

۲. Concerning the philosophy of the laws, one must not only focus on their material benefits and effects, nor pay attention only to their economic, medical and other dimensions but also assess their spiritual and otherworldly outcomes.

۳. Anyone who regards God as All-wise and His commands as based on wisdom should not neglect a command merely because of not knowing the reason behind it today.

۴. Whenever we do not have strong proof in the Qur'an and hadith of the philosophy of a law, it is better for us to keep silent rather than offering a series of justifications based on conjecture.

۵. If some secrets of the universe are revealed to us, we should not become arrogant and expect to know the reason behind everything.

For instance, Shaykh as-Saduq, 'Ilal ash-Sharayi' {Reasons of the Laws} and tens -۱
.of books concerning the secrets of prayer, Hajj pilgrimage, etc

beyond the common axis and fall prey to insinuations. Just as people entrust themselves to a physician and refrain from asking technical questions they are also supposed to accept and abide by the laws of God, for God is the Most Kind, the All-Knowing as well as the All-Wise; He knows the future, as well as the apparent and .hidden effects

If we discover a certain secret of God's law, we should not imagine that we have .۷ discovered the whole secrets. When one puts his hand under the sea, he has no right to say to the people that the water in his hand is the sea. Instead, he must say, "This water is from the sea, only as much as it fits in my palm." He who understands the philosophy of a law is not supposed to think that that which he understands is the whole truth and there is nothing else. Could the depth of the laws that emanate from the boundless knowledge of God be fathomed solely through the limited human ?intellect and reason

The same intellect that calls on us to understand the philosophy of laws directs us .۸ .toward the holy saints

Now, after these preliminaries, we shall cite some instances from the Qur'an and :hadiths which point out the philosophy of laws

:Firstly, we deal with the Qur'an

Regarding the prayer, the Qur'an states that it keeps man away from evil and (indecency.(۱

:In another place, it states

"And maintain the prayer for My remembrance."(2)

In yet another place,

1- "Indeed the prayer prevents indecencies and wrongs." Surah al-'Ankabut 29:45.
2- Surah Ta Ha 20:14.

it states:

"Look! The hearts find rest in Allah's remembrance!"(1)

Concerning fasting {sawm}, it declares:

"O you who have faith! Prescribed for you is fasting as it was prescribed for those who were before you, so that you may be God-wary."(2)

It is because many sins are outbursts of anger and carnal desire and fasting prevents that outburst and arouses fear of God {taqwa} in man. It is precisely for this reason that crime rates are and offenses is lower in the month of Ramadhan.

With regard to the Hajj, it says:

"That they may witness the benefit for them."(3)

The social and political benefits and impacts of Hajj are things that are beyond doubt and skepticism.

It thus states about the poor-rate {zakat}:

"Take charity from their possessions to cleanse them and purify them thereby, and bless them."(4)

It thus declares pertaining to gambling and intoxicants:

Indeed Satan seeks to cast enmity and hatred among you through wine and

(gambling, and to hinder you from the remembrance of Allah.”(5)

And it regards retribution {qisas}(6) as vital for the health of society.(7) The reason for this is that if the criminal is not punished the society will wither and die; crime will prosper while the oppressed will be crushed, and security of life and property will disappear.

These are some of the verses of the Qur’an that point out the effects and reasons behind the divine laws.

We shall now deal with the Prophetic traditions:

Among the abundant hadiths regarding this subject, we shall quote some lines of

p: ۵۱

۱- Surah ar-Ra‘d ۱۳:۲۸.
۲- Surah al-Baqarah ۲:۱۸۳.
۳- Surah al-Hajj ۲۲:۲۸.
۴- Surah at-Tawbah ۹:۱۰۳.
۵- Surah al-Ma’idah ۵:۹۰-۹۱.
۶- Qisas (literally means retribution or retaliation) in the Islamic jurisprudence is to be executed against a criminal, according to the legal decree, who has committed crimes such as murder, amputation of a limb, or beating in case the victim or his guardians are seeking retribution in lieu of receiving fine or blood money. {Trans.}
۷- Surah al-Baqarah ۲:۱۷۹: “And there is life for you in retaliation {qisas}, O men of understanding, that ye may ward off (evil).”

one of the speeches of the Commander of the Faithful (‘a) recorded in Nahj al-Balaghah:

فَرض الله الایمان تطهیراً مِنَ الشِرک وَ الصَلوهَ تَنزیهاً عَنِ الکِبر و الزکوه تسبیباً لِلرّزق...

“Allah has laid down belief {iman} for purification from polytheism, prayer {salah} for purification from vanity, zakat for purification of the means of livelihood.”(1)

Faith in God saves man from polytheistic thinking, futile worship and impotent sources .of support

The prayer which seeks to worship the Fountainhead of all greatnesses and pleads .{for help from the Epicenter of power and grandeur purges man of pride {kibr

Zakat provides succor to the unemployed; motivates and empowers the deprived and bankrupt; revives compassion and benevolence toward the needy; and it excludes love of wealth and the world from the heart of the alms giver. In addition, he will strive hard to compensate for the amount of zakat thus deducted from his wealth by engaging in more economically prosperous activities. It is natural that he who spends .a much must also work hard too. Therefore, zakat is a source of sustenance

In the above hadith Imam 'Ali ('a) points out the philosophy and wisdom behind the divine decrees such as fasting, enjoinment of what is good and prohibition of what is evil, jihad, prohibition of intoxicants and adultery {zina}, implementation of hudud,(۲) (obedience to the rightful leader, etc.(۳

The natural disposition {fitrah} of man also recognizes and acknowledges the philosophy of some laws. Man, since creation, believes that lying, treachery, ,slandering, killing, stealing, tyranny, hoarding, etc. are bad

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.Nahj al-Balaghah (Subhi Salih), Saying ۲۵۲; (Faydh al-Islam), Saying ۲۴۴ -۱

Hudud (literally means boundaries or limits) in the Islamic law is generally applied to -۲ penal law for punishments prescribed for particular crimes whose extent is {.determined by law. {Trans

Allah has laid down... fasting as a trial for the people, Hajj (pilgrimage) as a support" -۳ for religion, jihad (fighting in the cause of Allah) for the honor of Islam, persuasion for good for the benefit of the common people, dissuasion from evil for the control of the mischievous, regard for kinship for increase --in numbers, revenge for the stoppage of bloodshed, award of penalties for the realization of the importance of prohibitions, abstinence from drinking wine for the protection of wit, avoiding theft for inculcating

chastity, abstinence from adultery for safeguarding descent, abstinence from sodomy for the increase of progeny, tendering evidence for furnishing proof against contentions, abstinence from lies for increasing the esteem for truth, maintenance of peace for protection from danger, trusts for the orderliness of the community, and obedience as a mark of respect to the Imamate." Ibid.

while justice, purity, generosity, charity, etc. are good. This is the divine inspiration referred to in this verse:

(فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا)

"...and inspired it with {discernment between} its virtues and vices."(1)

It must not be overlooked that the advancement of science in various fields has rendered services in explaining the philosophy of religious laws by revealing their benefits.

For example, the existence of tapeworms in the flesh of the pig or the harmful effects of alcohol to the human liver and body are not hidden from anyone. This reveals the philosophy behind the prohibition of pork and intoxicants.

Islam discourages urinating while standing, and science shows that some urine remains in the urinary passages if one does so; or, the case of taking a bath {ghusl} it cleanses the effects of the activity of certain nerves and the disequilibrium in blood pressure caused by sexual intercourse {janabah}; all this with the intention of seeking nearness to Him {qurbah} In order to cleanse us from the state of negligence of God.

If Islam forbids using the wood of the pomegranate tree as a toothpick, it is because it is harmful for the gums of the teeth. As such, all the injunctions of Islam regarding the obligatory, the prohibited, the recommended and the undesirable in the spheres of behavior, eating, clothing, and other issues of life contain much wisdom, on which many books have been written by Muslim scholars and researchers.(2) But as a whole, it proves one thing and that is, all the

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.Surah ash-Shams ۹۱: ۸ -۱

For example, one may refer to the voluminous book, Awwalin Daneshgah va - ۲ Akharin Payambar {The First University and the Last Prophet}, written by Shahid Dr. .Paknezhad

laws of Islam are based on a definite philosophy and wisdom, some of which has been discovered. At any rate, the spirit of obedience demands that we accept and abide by ."everything which we know has been commanded by Allah

Submission as the greatest philosophy of responsibility

Undoubtedly, the commands of God and religious laws have reasons and philosophy, but it is not necessary for us to discover the economic, medical and scientific reasons of all the divine laws and commands. The Muslim must submit to the order of revelation, and this spirit of submission and acceptance demonstrates human perfection, as some orders are meant to test the spirit of submission and servitude. God's order to Ibrahim ('a) to sacrifice Isma'il ('a) is an example, and Ibrahim's ('a) .obedience is a sign of perfection in servitude

Let's take the example of walking; not all the time do we walk to reach a certain point but walking itself is our purpose; as in a march or walking for doing exercise, as well .as running in a race that the purpose is just running not reaching anywhere

In religious commands and divine laws, too, at times the aim is submission to and acceptance of the command and exercise for attracting the Worshipped's satisfaction .as well as mere obedience from the creator

The aim of devotional acts is to nurture the soul of man in the same manner as .athletic movements are meant to train the body

:Imam 'Ali and Imam as-Sajjad ('a) have said

اِلٰهی کَفیٰ بی عِزّاً أَنْ أَکُوْنَ لَکَ عَبْدًا.

O"

(Lord! It is already an enough honor for me that I am Your servant."(۱)

:In Munajat ash-Sha'baniyyah,(۲) we read

لَئِنْ أَدْخَلْتَنِی النَّارَ أَعْلَنْتُ أَهْلَهَا إِنِّی أُحِبُّکَ!

O Lord!) Even if You throw me into the hellfire, I shall announce to its dwellers that I)"
"!love You

:Ali ('a) declared'

إلهی ما عَبَدتُکَ خَوْفاً مِنْ نارِک وَ لا طَمَعاً فی جَنَّتِک بَلْ وَجَدْتُک أهْلاً لِلْعِبادَه فَعَبَدتُک.

O God! My worship is not out of fear of hell or desire for Your paradise. Rather, it is"
(because I found You worthy of worship and thus I worshipped You."(۳

The divine saints {awliya'} acquire pleasure in worshipping God while sinners are .deprived of this pleasure found in the remembrance of God

Sometimes, a person wants to serve another without having any monetary motive or economic aim. For him, rendering service itself to that great person is itself the aim and is valuable in itself and not the acquisition of knowledge, earning money or the .attainment of a certain social standing

So many are glad to sit beside a certain figure or take pictures with him even if it brings no benefit to him at all. To be with the said person is in itself important for him. If such an act is precious and pleasurable for human beings in this world, should ?servitude to God and being in His Presence not be a source of pride

?Pretext or Research

Keeping in mind what has been discussed so far, it is obvious that there are those who do not possess the spirit of submission and

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{.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۷۷, p. ۴۰۲. {Trans -۱

Munajat Ash-Sha'baniyyah: a litany that was recited by all the infallible Imams ('a), -۲ something true of no other prayer or invocation, during the month of Sha'ban. {.{Trans

{.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۷۰, p. ۱۸۶. {Trans -۳

obedience and are looking for pretexts to find fault with religious obligation and religiosity. As such, they bring about the issue of "research" and are looking for the philosophy and reasons behind every religious injunction while claiming to be "intellectuals". Regarding such persons, the Holy Qur'an thus says concerning belief in :the Day of Resurrection

(بَلْ يُرِيْدُ الإِنْسَانُ لِيَفْجُرَ أَمَامَهُ يَسْئَلُ أَيَّانَ يَوْمُ الْقِيامَهِ)

Rather man desires to go on living viciously. He asks, 'When is this day of" (resurrection?"(۱

They are like children who are constantly seeking excuses. Regarding such :individuals, the Glorious Qur'an says

(وَ إِنْ يَرَوا آيَهً يُعْرِضُوا وَ يَقُولُوا سِحْرٌ مُسْتَمِرّ)

(If they see a sign, they turn away, and say, 'An incessant magic!"(۲"

Strangely enough, they unconditionally submit to the mechanic, the physician, all external fashions, baseless insinuations and satanic inclinations, but when a religious .command comes, they disparagingly become men of research and reasoning

An encounter

One day, someone asked: "Why does the dawn {subh} prayer have two rak'ahs?" I ".replied, "I do not know. It is the command of God and we have to perform it

As soon as I said I do not know, he began posing as an "intellectual" and said: "The

world is a world of science. Today, religion without science is not correct…" I asked, "Now, you tell me why the leaf of a pomegranate tree is small while the leaf of the grapevine is big and wide?"

He answered, "I do not know." I smiled and said: "The world is

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۱- ۶-۷۵:۵ Surah al-Qiyamah.
۲- ۵۴:۲ Surah al-Qamar.

a world of science. Science must give a reason for it…" His sense of arrogance diminished immediately, so I said: "Brother! We do accept that the world is a world of science, but it does not mean that all the secrets of the universe must be known to us now.

There definitely is a relationship between the small leaf of pomegranates and the wide leaf of grapes and their fruits, which the experts on leaves, soil, plants and fruits have not yet discovered. Thus, we acknowledge the existence of secrets, but we will never accept anybody's claim to knowing all of them."

By the way, if we had to know the philosophy of laws first before abiding by them, where would worship of and submission to God be headed? Divine revelation {wahy} is superior to science and more mysterious than human knowledge. Why do so-called intellectuals obey man-made laws and programs, but when it comes to the laws of God and religion, being "men of logic" they find them difficult to believe?!

Prayer {Salah}

point

We have discussed the acts of worship and their conditions and philosophy. After stating those generalities, we shall now deal with their manifestations and examine the most apparent form of servitude which is prayer {salah}. First of all, we need to know the status of prayer from the perspective of the (Qur'an and hadith).

Thereafter, we shall touch on its details and secrets. Let us recall some of the views of {the school of revelation {maktab-e wahy

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:regarding prayer

• Prayer has been one of the most important commands of the prophets ('a) and one of the most apparent manifestations of worship. Hadhrat Luqman says to his son:

"O my son! Maintain the prayer."(۱)

• Prayer is a cure for forgetfulness and a means of remembrance of God:

"And maintain the prayer for My remembrance."(۲)

• The Messenger of Allah (S) said: "Prayer is the covenant of Allah."(۳)

• Prayer is like solace for our Beloved Prophet (S), since he said: "My eyes find solace in prayer."(۴)

• Prayer is a means of seeking assistance in times of adversity and difficulty. God says:

"And take recourse in patience and prayer."(۵)

• Prayer is a cure for arrogance. 'Ali ('a) says: "Allah has laid down... prayer for purification from vanity."(۶)

• Prayer is a means of thanking God for His blessings:

"So pray to your Lord and offer sacrifice (in gratitude)."(۷)

• Prayer is the physiognomy of our school {maktab}: "Prayer is the physiognomy of your religion."(۸)

• Prayer identifies the school of Islam. The Holy Prophet (S) said: "Prayer is the banner of Islam."(۹)

- Prayer is a firm support of religion: “And it (prayer) is the pillar of your religion.”(۱۰)
- Prayer is like a head for the body. The Prophet of Islam (S) said: “The position of prayer in religion is like that of the head to the body.”(۱۱)
- Prayer is the key to paradise.(۱۲)
- Prayer assesses people: “Prayer is a scale {mizan}.”(۱۳)
- Prayer is the basis of religion: “Islam is based on ...prayer”(۱۴)
- Prayer is

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۱- Surah Luqman ۳۱:۱۷.

۲- Surah Ta Ha ۲۰:۱۴.

۳- Kanz al-‘Ummal, vol. ۷, p. ۲۷۹.

۴- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۷۷, p. ۷۷.

۵- Surah al-Baqarah ۲:۴۵.

۶- Nahj al-Balaghah (Subhi Salih), Saying ۲۵۲; (Faydh al-Islam), Saying ۲۴۴.

۷- Surah al-Kawthar ۱۰۸:۲.

۸- Furu‘ al-Kafi, vol. ۱, p. ۲۷۰.

۹- Kanz al-‘Ummal, vol. ۷, p. ۲۷۹.

۱۰- Mustadrak al-Hakim, vol. ۱, p. ۱۷۲.

۱۱- Nahj al-Fasahah, Statement ۳۰۷۵.

۱۲- Nahj al-Fasahah, Statement ۱۵۸۸.

۱۳- Furu‘ al-Kafi, vol. ۱, p. ۲۶۷.

۱۴- Wasa’il ash-shi’ah. vol. ۱, p. ۴.

the first question that will be asked on the Day of Resurrection: “The first thing to be accounted with respect to the servant {‘abd} is prayer.”(۱)

- Prayer washes away sins. In a hadith, prayer is likened to a river in which man takes a bath five times a day and no dirt remains on his body.(۲)

- Prayer is the relationship of the creature {makhluq} to the Creator {khaliq}; it acquaints man's spirit with God and familiarizes him physically with nature—water, earth, qiblah, sunrise, sunset, time, etc.

- Prayer is the only form of worship which cannot be abandoned even at the moment of drowning in time of and war. It is the loudest declaration of man's obeisance to God and total freedom from the dominance of the powerful.

- Prayer revives the tradition of Ibrahim, Muhammad, Husayn, and the Mahdi ('a).

- Prayer is a means of gaining nearness to God.(٣)

- Prayer is the last injunction of the prophets ('a) and the last injunction of Imam as-Sadiq ('a) before his last breath. The Imam asked all his relatives and children to gather around him and then said, "Anyone who treats prayer lightly shall not be included in our intercession {shafa'ah} in the Day of Resurrection."(۴)

- Prayer is a pleasure for divine saints {awliya'} but a heavy burden for hypocrites {munafiqun}:

(وَإِنَّهَا لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلاَّ عَلَى الْخَاشِعِينَ)

"And it (prayer) is indeed hard except for the humble."(۵)

- Prayer defeats all the wiles of Satan.(۶)

Importance of Prayer

Apart from the verses of the Qur'an and hadiths cited so

١- Nahj al-Fasahah, Statement ٩٧٩.

٢- Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ٣, p. ٧.

٣- Furu' al-Kafi, vol. ١, p. ٢۶۵.

۴- Furu' al-Kafi, vol. ١, p. ٢۶۴.

.Surah al-Baqarah ۲:۴۵ -۵

.{Fihrist 'Azr al-Hikam, under "salah" {prayer -۶

far, the conduct of the divine saints also expresses the important status of prayer. Prayer has been part of the programs of the prophets ('a). While in the cradle, Hadhrat 'Isa (Jesus) ('a) says that God has enjoined him to establish prayer and pay :the poor-rate {zakat} so long as he is alive

(وَ أَوْصَانِی بِالصَّلوٰهِ وَ الزَّکوٰهِ مَادُمْتُ حَیًّا)

And He has enjoined me to {maintain} the prayer and to {pay} the zakat as long as I" (live."(۱

Imam al-Husayn ('a) did not neglect prayer even at noontime on the day of 'Ashura' .on the battlefield while facing the arrows of the enemies

Hadhrat Ibrahim ('a) settled his wife and child in the wilderness of the desert of :Makkah which had no water or plants at that time, saying

(رَّبَّنَا إِنِّی أَسْکَنتُ مِن ذُرِّیَّتِی بِوَادٍ غَیْرِ ذِی زَرْعٍ عِندَ بَیْتِکَ الْمُحَرَّمِ رَبَّنَا لِیُقِیمُواْ الصَّلاَهَ)

O Lord! I have settled part of my descendants in a barren valley, by Your sacred" (House, our Lord, that they may maintain the prayer."(۲

Our infallible predecessors ('a) used to tremble at the time of prayer and say: "It is the (time to discharge the divine trust in the Divine Precinct and Court.(۳

Although some people say their prayers in order to be admitted to paradise or out of fear of the fire of hell, the Commander of the Faithful ('a) used to perform prayer not (for trade (gain) or release from hellfire but because of God being worthy of worship.(۴

In order to teach

.Surah Maryam ۱۹:۳۱ -۱

.Surah Ibrahim ۱۴:۳۷ -۲
.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۱ -۳
.Nahj al-Balaghah, Saying ۲۳۷ -۴

the importance of prayer, Islam has enjoined parents to persuade their children to pray before they reach the age of puberty, , starting from the age of eight, in whatever way they can and sometimes, also with the use of force because of their (children's heedlessness.(۱

Praying connects man with the Origin of the universe just like a pilot maintains a link .with the control tower

Prayer remits sins and erases their after-effects. After enjoining prayer, the Holy :Qur'an states

(إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ)

(Indeed good deeds efface misdeeds."(۲"

Prayer as viewed by reason and conscience

All humans, especially Muslims have rights upon each other. One of these human rights is to be thanked for the love and goodness shown to others. Even if we are not Muslims, we are duty-bound to be grateful for the love and attention we get from others. This right is identical in every language, race, nationality and country. Gratitude must be directly proportionate to the graciousness enjoyed. Just think, is there anyone who has more right to us than God? There can be no one because God's favors and blessings are innumerable, and He Himself is the Most Generous Being of .all

God created us from a single cell and provided us with all that we need in order to survive, such as light, heat, earth, air, water, bodily limbs, instincts, strength, nature, plants animals, senses, intellect, emotions, etc. He sent the prophets ('a) for our .guidance and spiritual training through a set of laws

He determined what was lawful {halal} and what was

.Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۳, p. ۱۳ -۱
.Surah Hud ۱۱:۱۱۴ -۲

unlawful {haram} equipped and our "material" and "spiritual" lives with perfect means and methods. He made available the conditions for our worldly and otherworldly growth, advancement and bliss. Who is the one who does us more good than God and ?who deserves being worshipped more than God

In the words of Sa'di, every breath that is inhaled extends life and of the air that is inhaled, energizes the inhaler. Thus, there are two blessings in every breath, and :thanks-giving is obligatory for every blessing

از دست و زبانِ که برآید کز عهده شکرش به درآید

(Whatever gratitude the hand and tongue can express must be given for the air.(۱

He endowed us with the guidance of the prophets ('a) and the Infallibles ('a). He made man conquer the world and nature and gave him the power to benefit from the gifts of nature, to discover the secrets of the world and to use them along the path of .success and life

.Leaves and plants take the carbon in the atmosphere and release oxygen

.Rain drops make the atmosphere clean and fresh

.Sharks eat dead fishes in the sea and thus remove the foul smell from the water

Every instant our eyes take varied and exact pictures of all things from different .angles

.If our lips were not soft, we would not have the power to speak

.If tears were not salty, our eyes which are created from nerves would be destroyed

.If the water was bitter or salty, trees would not grow

If the

.Golestan-e Sa'di, preface -۱

earth had no gravity; if the distance between the sun and earth were shorter; if at the time of birth we did know how to suck milk; if the kindness of mother and father did ?not exist; and thousands of other "ifs"... could we have survived

However, we are not aiming to count the blessings of God as we cannot do that. God .Himself said that if we tried to count His blessings we would not succeed in doing so

If one million of us were enjoying these blessings from someone else, would we not ?have been indebted to, and thank him for the rest of our lives

Our human duty and conscience demand that we express gratefulness for the divine .favors, establish prayer and worship God in gratitude for all these blessings

We should also worship God and we should become His servants because He created .us. We should not become slaves of the East or West

Prayer is an expression of gratitude to God, and every wise and conscientious person .realizes the necessity of establishing prayer

A dog expresses gratefulness for a bone given to it by wagging its tail, and if a thief or a stranger enters the house, it will attack him. If man is indifferent to all these favors of God and lacks the spirit of giving thanks which is manifested in the form of prayer, !?is he not lower than the dog in recognition of another's worth

Some Questions and Answers

?Question: Does God need our gratitude

Answer: Never! Appreciation of a favor is a

p: ۶۳

virtue for us and a sign of our sense of justice, and not a sign of God's need of our thanks. If a teacher says to his student, "You have to acknowledge my efforts (in teaching you) and study hard, the teacher does not mean that he is in need of his student's acknowledgment and seriousness in studies. It is rather to enhance the .excellence of the student himself

Question: If we are supposed to thank God for His blessings, why must we perform ?prayer

Answer: Once we admit the essential need for expressing gratitude, the manner of doing so must be according to the procedure outlined by God. Once it is determined that it is necessary for a patient to consult a doctor, the manner of taking the .medicine is according to the doctor's prescription

So, we must express gratitude according to the will of God. As soon as a pilot consents to take flight in whatever part of the world he may be he has to contact the control tower using the English language. So, we have to learn the manner of giving thanks .from the command of God and the ways of the divine saints

Question: Is it proper to express thanks for blessings, even if one is living in the midst ?of unpleasant circumstances

Answer: First of all, many of our troubles are the result of our own making. For example, by not observing health instructions, we become sick. Due to laziness and apathy, we experience stagnation in life. Foolishly

p: ۶۴

.choosing a friend can cause troubles, etc

Secondly, unpleasant circumstances are also good because they urge man to strive .more and make his talents blossom

Thirdly, we should look at bitterness alongside sweetness and look at afflictions alongside numerous blessings.

Fourthly, sometimes hardships and afflictions bring about spiritual elevation, reevaluation of the self, and a renewal of faith in hearts broken by expecting from 'other-than-God'.

Negligence of Prayer

Negligence of prayer means curtailing the establishment of a relationship with the Creator of the universe, and this has painful consequences in this world and in the hereafter. In the hereafter, the inhabitants of heaven will ask the dwellers of hell, "What made you inhabit the hellfire?" One of their answers shall be:

(لَمْ نَکُ مِنَ الْمُصَلِّینَ)

"We were not among those who prayed."(1)

In another place, the Glorious Qur'an addresses those who are careless and heedless of their prayer, sometimes performing it and at other times not performing it, thus:

(فَوَیْلٌ لِّلْمُصَلِّینَ الَّذِینَ هُمْ عَن صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ)

"Woe to them who pray—those who are heedless of their prayers."(2)

The Messenger of Allah (S) has said:

مَنْ تَرَکَ الصّلاه مُتعمّدًا فَقَد کَفر.

"He who consciously neglects prayer has become an infidel."(3)

The Holy Prophet (S) has also said:

بَیْنَ العَبدِ وَ بَیْنَ الکُفر تَرْکُ الصَّلاهِ.

"That which lies between faith and disbelief is the negligence of prayer."(4)

Treating Prayer Lightly

Giving value to prayer is a sign of faith in God, and heedlessness is caused by weakness of love and loss of interest in spiritualities. Hadhrat 'Ali ('a) said: "Verily, the

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.Surah al-Muddathir ۷۴:۴۳ -۱

.Surah al-Ma'un ۱۰۷:۴-۵ -۲

.Muhajjah al-Baydha', vol. ۱, p. ۳۰۱ -۳

.Nahj al-Fasahah, Statement ۱۰۹۸ -۴

(worst of thieves among people is he who steals his prayer."(۱

In another place, Imam 'Ali ('a) said: "Those who treat prayer lightly are like women (who abort their fetuses; they can neither be called pregnant nor having children."(۲

And the Imam ('a) also said: "He who treats prayer lightly and ruins it will also ruin (other affairs."(۳

The Prophet of Islam (S) said: "He who spoils his prayer shall be with Qarun and Haman on the Day of Resurrection. Woe unto him who does not take care of his (prayer!"(۴

:The Apostle (S) also said

God shall take away the blessings, benefits and goodness from the life and wealth of the one who treats prayer lightly. There will be no reward for his deeds; his supplications will not be heard. At the time of death, he will depart from this world with the feeling of hunger, thirst and remorse. He will be tortured, chastised and pressurized in purgatory {barzakh}.(۵) On the Day of Resurrection, he will be called (strictly to account.(۶

(He (S) also said: "He who treats prayer lightly is not of my ummah {community}."(۷

:The Holy Prophet (S) is also reported to have said

When a person pays attention to other than God during prayer, God says to him: "To "

whom you are paying attention? Do you have a deity other than Me? Is there any protector other than Me? Are you attached to a compassionate being other than Me? I am the Most Compassionate... If you will pay attention to Me, My angels and

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.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۴, p. ۲۴۲ -۱

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۴, p. ۲۸۴ -۲

.Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۳, p. ۱۹ -۳

.Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۳, p. ۱۹ -۴

Barzakh, literally means an isthmus, is the interval between the death of the - ۵ individual and the general resurrection. It is mentioned in the Qur'an (۲۳:۱۰۰): "And {.after them shall be a barzakh until the day they shall be raised." {Trans

.Safinah al-Bahar, vol. ۲, p. ۴۳ -۶

.Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۳, p. ۱۵ -۷

(I will pay attention to you."(۱

Unaccepted Prayers

point

We have said that it is possible for an act to be proper but not accepted like a saleable item without a buyer. In the hadiths, the prayers of some individuals have been considered unacceptable because of various reasons, examples of which follow :below

Those who are Indifferent .۱

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) said: "The prayer of those who are indifferent to the barefooted (and displaced people of the society, is not accepted."(۲

Those who live on unlawful earnings .۲

The Holy Prophet (S) said: "The prayer of those who live on unlawful earnings is like (constructing castles on sand."(۳

۳. Those who are unmindful of their duties

The Messenger of Allah (S) said: "The prayer of a wife who enjoys the income of her husband but does not discharge her divine obligation is not accepted."(۴)

۴. Those who do not pay zakat {poor-rate}

In most instances, the payment of zakat {poor-rate} has been mentioned in the Holy Qur'an alongside the establishment of prayer, and it has been stated in many hadiths that the prayer of those who do not give their zakat will not be accepted.(۵) One day, the Messenger of Allah (S) entered the mosque and asked nine people to leave the mosque for not paying zakat. He then offered his prayers. Yes, a relationship with God must be built on a relationship with the deprived.

۵. Those who are lackadaisical

The prayer of one who is impious, or does not perform his ruku' {kneeling down} and sujud {prostration} properly, is not accepted.(۶)

۶. Those who are "haqin wa haqib"

Haqin wa haqib refers to a person who holds his urine and feces, and in doing so, exerts pressure on himself and experiences physical stress. In addition to being harmful

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۱- Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, vol. ۱, p. ۱۷۳.

۲- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۴, p. ۲۴۲.

۳- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۴, p. ۲۵۸.

۴- Nahj al-Fasahah, Statement ۵۴.

۵- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۴, p. ۳۱۷.

۶- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۴, pp. ۲۵۳, ۲۵۸.

to health, this practice disrupts one's concentration in prayer. Imam as-Sadiq ('a) said: "The prayer of such a person is not accepted."(۱)

Those who are unacceptable prayer leaders .٧

Sometimes, it is possible that the people do not accept the prayer leader in a mosque and for selfish reasons, he refuses to leave the mosque or his position. Such a case will naturally lead to quarrels and disruptions in the congregational prayer. It is stated in traditions that the congregational prayer of such persons is considered (unacceptable.(٢

(Prayers of the Infallibles {ma'sumin} ('a

The manner of prayer of the holy saints is both inspiring and instructive, and a model :for their followers. We shall survey some examples of their manner of prayer

The sound of adhan {call to prayer} was so attractive and delightful to the Messenger of Allah (S) that at the time of prayer, he would say to Bilal (the one calling to prayer): "O Bilal! Relieve us (from grief, anguish and pain)."(٣) And the Prophet (S) used to say: ("He who hears the adhan but remains indifferent is unkind."(۴

At the time of prayer, 'Ali ('a) used to turn pale and start trembling, saying: "The time of prayer has come—the time of the trust offered by God to the heavens, the earth (and the mountains, but they refrained from shouldering it."(۵

This act of shouldering the burden of the divine trust is the greatest honor of man. In (the words of Hafiz,(۶

آسمان بار امانت نتوانست کشید قرعه فال به نام من دیوانه زدند

.Heaven was not able to carry the burden of the trust

The

.Muhajjah al-Baydha', vol. ١, p. ٣۵۴ -١

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ٨۴, p. ٣١٧ -٢

.Muhajjah al-Baydha', vol. ١, p. ٣٧٧ -٣

.Nahj al-Fasahah, Statement ۱۳۲ -۴

.Tafsir Safi, vol. ۲, p. ۳۷۰ -۵

Khwajah Shams ad-Din Muhammad Hafiz Shirazi (ca. ۱۳۲۵-۱۳۹۱) was the fourteenth -۶ century Persian lyric bard and panegyrist, and commonly considered as the {.preeminent master of the ghazal form. {Trans

.lot fell upon me, the foolish

At the time of prayer, when Imam as-Sajjad ('a) would reach the point of reciting "maliki yawmi'd-din" {You are the Master of the Day of Judgment} (in Surah al-Fatihah), he would repeat it so many times that listeners would imagine that he was .on the verge of death.(۱) And while in prostration {sujud}, he would sweat profusely

Imam al-Baqir ('a) said: "My father (Imam as-Sajjad) used to perform a thousand (rak'ahs of prayer day and night."(۲

Whenever the time of prayer arrived, it seemed as if the Messenger of Allah (S) knew no one for he would enter a strange spiritual state.(۳) He used to say: "Hunger can be satiated and thirst can be quenched, but my desire for prayer can never be (satisfied."(۴

During the Battle of Siffin, 'Ali ('a) remained watchful of the sun's position in the sky. 'Abd Allah ibn al-'Abbas asked the reason for this. The Imam said: "I do not wish to miss offering the prayer as soon as its time begins." "Now, on the battlefield?!" asked (Ibn al-'Abbas (in astonishment). The Imam replied, "Yes!"(۵

Yes, just as fishes are not tired of swimming, divine saints {awliya'} are not tired of worship and prayer. Rather, with every act of worship, they find more pleasure being .in the Presence of God

It is narrated that during the month of Ramadhan, the late 'Allamah Amini (author of the book, Al-Ghadir) used to perform a thousand rak'ahs of prayer every night.(۶) This is supposed to be the method

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۴, p. ۲۴۷ -۱
.Wasa’il ash-Shi‘ah, vol. ۱, p. ۶۸ -۲
.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۴, p. ۲۵۸ -۳
.Mustadrak al-Wasa’il, vol. ۱, p. ۱۷۴ -۴
.Safinah al-Bahar, vol. ۲, p. ۴۴ -۵
.As narrated by Ayatullah Murwarid in Mashhad -۶

of someone who has learned the lesson of love from the saints of Allah. At the time of prayer, the upright servants and divine saints used to establish prayer with much fervor, apply perfume, wear the best of clothes, welcome the prayer and experience fear and dread lest they do not earn the favor of God, or they do not have the necessary amount of humility and attention in prayer.

Prerequisites of Prayer

Observance of some rules related to prayer (such as brushing the teeth {miswak}, cleanliness, attention to God, etc.) is contributory in the perfection of this act of worship. Imam al-Baqir ('a) has said:

عَلَيْکَ بِالْأقْبالِ عَلی صَلاَتِکَ فَإِنَّمَا يُحْسَبُ لَکَ مِنْهَا مَا أَقْبَلْتَ عَلَيْهِ.

"Pay attention to God while in prayer because what is accepted in prayer is that which is said with attention."(۱)

The Imam ('a) continued: "During the prayer, do not play with your hand, head and face because all these things cause deficiency in prayer, and do not perform prayer while in a state of sluggishness, sleepiness and weariness because such a prayer is that of hypocrites {munafiqun}."(۲)

In a hadith, the Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said:

رَکْعَتَانِ مِنْ رَجُلٍ وَرعٍ أَفْضَلُ مِنْ أَلْفِ رَکْعَهٍ مِن مَخْلَطٍ.

"A person's two rak'ahs of prayer with piety {wara'} are superior to a thousand rak'ahs of prayer with heedlessness."(۳)

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) said: "At the time of prayer, neglect the world and all it contains; focus all your attention on God; and remember the day when you will be brought in front of

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.Muhajjah al-Baydha', vol. ١, p. ٣٥۴ -١

.Muhajjah al-Baydha', vol. ١, p. ٣٥۴ -٢

.Nahj al-Fasahah, Statement ١۶٧٢ -٣

(the court of divine justice."(١

The same Imam ('a) also said: "Sometimes, fifty years of prayer may pass without even a single prayer being accepted." And we also read in a hadith: "Some stand in front of God and pray in such a manner that if they talk in a similar manner with their (neighbor, he will not answer them."(٢

The Messenger of Allah (S) is reported to have said: "Two rak'ahs of prayer of a person who brushed his teeth are superior to seventy rak'ahs of the one who did not (brush his teeth."(٣

Prayer and its Accompaniments

In the numerous verses of the Qur'an in which prayer is mentioned, there are also other accompany commands, such as paying zakat, giving charity, enjoining what is good, forbidding what is evil, and spending (in the way of Allah) by attending to the deprived. This shows the universality of the devotional laws of Islam that alongside connection with the Lord, economic and social issues as well as tackling with the poor, and enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil are also raised and no issue can (prevent paying attention to other issues.(۴

,And it is here that the verse

(Indeed the prayer prevents indecencies and wrongs,"(٥"

becomes clearer and more understandable, and it is obvious that implementing this .divine precept will prevent the corruption of Muslim society

Prayer as Spiritual Ascension

Prayer has been mentioned in the hadiths as “ascension of the believer” {mi‘raj al-mu’min}. This ascension and flight, however, is not in the open space of the sky but in

p: ۷۱

۱- Muhajjah al-Baydha’, vol. ۱, p. ۳۸۲.

۲- Al-Wafi, vol. ۲, p. ۱۳.

۳- Nahj al-Fasahah, Statement ۱۶۶۹.

۴- One may refer to the following verses of the Qur’an: wirh respect to this, Surah al-Baqarah, verse ۸۳; Surah al-Anfal, verse ۳; Surah at-Tawbah, verse ۷۱; Surah Luqman, verse ۱۷; Surah al-Muzammil, verse ۲۰; and many other verses.

۵- Surah al-‘Ankabut ۲۹:۴۵.

the sphere of spirituality and servitude, and it is aimed at attaining “nearness to God”, .not reaching mountain peaks thousands of feet above the ground

One may compare the spiritual flight and mystical ascension of the one praying with :the flight of an airplane in the sky

۱. Most of the force and pressure is applied at the time of the aircraft’s take off. In worship and prayer, the main difficulty is to overcome carnal desire and commence .the act of worship

۲. The importance of both flights lies in a safe and risk-free landing. Worship also has value if its ending is wholesome and without the blemish of self-conceit {‘ujb} and ”.{arrogance {ghurur

۳. For its energy, the airplane is in need of pure and special fuel. The spiritual ascension of the one praying also necessitates pure attention and negation of all other servitudes. By raising his hands up to the bottom of his ears he negates and

.refuses everything other than God, and thus attains the purity of intention

The pilot must be physically and mentally sound for the flight. In the prayer and to .۴ .be in the Presence of God, “a sound mind and heart” are also necessary

The aircraft flies by means of two wings. In prayer also, along with the discharging .۵ of the “right of Allah” {haqq Allah} one must also discharge the “right of men” {haqq an-nas}. Along with “yuqimuna’s-salat” {establish your prayer}, the Qur’an in most .{cases has also “yu’tuna’z-zakat” {pay your alms-rate

,In order to fly .۶

p: ۷۲

the airplane covers a long distance on the ground to acquire the ability to take off. The preliminaries of prayer, the adhan, iqamah, and recommended invocations {dhikr} are also the groundwork of this spiritual flight. (The supplications after the ritual prayer and subsequent invocations also constitute the movement on the ground after (.landing

In flying, the first mistake is also the last mistake and is accompanied by crashing .۷ and annihilation. In worship also, polytheism {shirk}, self-admiration {‘ujb} and ostentation {riya’} will lead astray. By committing a single mistake, Iblis who had a !record of six thousand years of worship was cast out and accursed till eternity

Every pilot makes a move on the order of the control tower. Prayer and worship are .۸ also according to the order, and even a single minute before or after the appointed .period or against the law will render them invalid

The pilot rests between flights, while the aircraft goes through its routine .۹ maintenance. Along with invocation and worship, sometimes man is also in need of rest and lawful enjoyments as well as engagement in earning a livelihood, and a person like the Messenger of Allah (S) would sometimes say, “kallimini ya .(humayra.”(O, Humeyra, come and chat with me

For the pilot's communication with the control tower, there is only one officially .١٠ recognized language. The contact of the one praying with God is only through Arabic and in the devotional act of Hajj, the state of ihram(١) commences with the recital of "“labbayk allahumma labbayk

p: ٧٣

Ihram: the special two-piece seamless attire worn by pilgrims. Also, the state of -١ ritual consecration during which the pilgrim should abstain from certain acts, such as {.not combing, not shaving, and observing sexual continence. {Trans

.{Here I come, O Lord, here I come}

Prior to flying, directions based on the weather forecast, map-reading, . ١١ determination of direction, etc. need to be followed. In worship, preliminary pieces of information are also necessary, and worship without knowledge and jurisprudence is worthless. Even in trade, familiarity with the laws of God is also needed, let alone in .prayer and worship

The higher the pilot, ascends the more the ground seems to become small for him. .١٢ The more a holy man is acquainted with the greatness of God, anything other than God becomes more trivial in his sight. In the words of the Commander of the Faithful :(('a

عَظُمَ الْخَالِقُ فِی أَنْفُسِهِم فَصَغرَ مَادُوْنَهُ فِی أَعْیُنِهِم.

The greatness of the Creator is seated in their heart, and so, everything else appears" (small in their eyes."(١

The bigger the airplane, the smoother the flight and the more comfortable the .١٣ passengers will be. In prayer and worship also, that which is done in congregation (the large gathering of people in the congregation and Hajj) has more reward and the .possibility of its being accepted is greater

Usually, there is a co-pilot accompanying the pilot for emergencies. In the . ١٤

congregational prayer also, there are just and pious individuals standing in the first row so that in case a problem (affecting the ability of the Imam to continue leading .the prayer) arises, one of them can assume leadership of the prayer up to the end

In physical flight, when the pilot and .۱۵

.(Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon ۱۹۱ (Khutbah al-Muttaqin or Hammam -۱

passengers are in the sky, they are away from and uninformed of their domestic problems and concerns. In spiritual flight also, when the soul is at its zenith, the attention to material things become insignificant, so much so that an arrow pulled .from the foot of Hadhrat Amir ('Ali) ('a) was not felt at all

In flight, descending from the summit is called "lessening the altitude" although it is .۱۶ still high in relation to those that are on the ground. Although the worship of the saints of Allah is always high in relation to the prayer and worship of common people, for them this "lessening of the altitude" by coming down from the pinnacle is a sort of shortcoming and degradation, and they always asked forgiveness {istighfar} for it. This is the meaning of

حَسَنَاتُ الأَبْرَارِ سَيِّئَاتُ الْمُقَرَّبِيْن.

".The good qualities of the pious are blemishes for the anointed ones"

To conclude, prayer is the uninterrupted attention of the worshipper toward the Creator of the universe and the heart's detachment from worldly desires is regarded as a flight by the people of gnosis {ahl al-ma'rifah}—a flight higher than the flight of .birds in the air or the flight of aircraft in the earth's atmosphere and beyond

?What causes man's descent is his attachment to material things and carnal desires

,In the words of Sa'di

طیران مرغ دیدی؟ تو ز پای بندِ شهوت بدر آی تا ببینی طیران آدمیت

Have you seen birds fly? Detach yourself from your carnal desires and

.then watch the flight of man

!Let's Welcome Prayer

point

To embark on the constructive form of worship, i.e. prayer, we shall cite a set of physical and spiritual preliminaries in terms of cleanliness and purity of body and soul .as well as other preparations

Preliminaries of prayer

Preliminaries are those essentials whose performance or provision prior to prayer is :necessary. They are as follows

{Purification {taharah

For the performance of the prayer, the one praying must be in a state of ritual and spiritual purification {taharah}. Sometimes, he does so by ablution {wudhu'}, taking a bath {ghusl}, and under certain circumstances, by performing dry ablution .{{tayammum

Ablution is part of faith {iman}, and in the words of Imam al-Baqir ('a), "Prayer without ablution is not prayer at all,"(۱) and in some hadiths ablution has been described as the ("key to faith" and "half of faith.(۲

:Imam ar-Rida ('a) made an interesting statement regarding ablution when he said

Ablution is a courtesy toward God ensuring that the servant is clean while praying .۱ ;and standing before God

;It aims at purging him of all pollution and contamination .۲

In addition, it is the shedding of laziness and discarding sleepiness; and .۳

(It makes the heart and soul ready to stand in front of God, the Exalted.(۳ .۴

In this noble hadith, the Imam ('a) has pointed out all the physical and spiritual dimensions of ablution, i.e. cleanliness and purity as well as preparation of the soul, acquisition of enthusiasm to worship and the paving of the spiritual ground for .worship

:The late Faydh Kashani said

.Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۱, p. ۲۵۶ -۱
.Muhajjah al-Baydha', vol. ۱, p. ۲۸۱ -۲
.Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۱, p. ۲۵۷ -۳

Rising from materiality all at once toward spirituality is hard, but performance of" (ablution gradually prepares man for it."(۱

Ablution {wudhu'} in every state

The inner luminosity and purity blessed by ablution {wudhu'} is significant. It is therefore emphasized in the hadiths that a person must always be in a state of ablution; ablution is likened to a light;(۲) and sleeping while in a state of ablution has (been considered like life and night vigil.(۳

To perform ablution has been recommended for supplication, recitation of the Qur'an, (ziyarah, and many other good and devotional acts.(۴

Without ablution, it is forbidden to touch the verses of the Qur'an and the names of Allah, the Prophet and Imams ('a).(۵) The same ruling applies even if the name of Allah appears in different forms, such as the logos of institutions and establishments (such .(as the logo of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Ablution permits entrance into the Presence of God, and specific supplications for its different steps have also been mentioned in books. There are many issues concerning

ablution which cannot be covered in this volume. It should not remain unsaid, however, that it is unlawful to use water if it reaches the bound of what may be :considered as extravagance. The Messenger of Allah (S) has said

أَلْوُضُوءُ مُدٌّ وَ الْغُسْلُ صَاعٌ وَ سَيَأْتِى أَقْوَامٌ يَسْتَقِلُّونَ ذٰلِكَ فَأُولٰئِكَ عَلىٰ خِلاَفِ سُنَّتى.

For ablution a mudd(۶) and for taking a bath {ghusl} a sa'(۷) are enough, but there" will come people in the future, people who will regard this amount as not enough

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.Muhajjah al-Baydha', vol. ۱, p. ۲۸۱ -۱

.Qassar al-Jamal, vol. ۱, p. ۳۱۱ -۲

.Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۱, p. ۲۶۶ -۳

.Tawdhih al-Masa'il, under the section on ablution -۴

.Tawdhih al-Masa'il, under the section on ablution -۵

{.A mudd is approximately equivalent to three-fourth kilogram. {Trans -۶

{.A sa' is approximately equivalent to three kilograms. {Trans -۷

and they will consume more volumes of water). Therefore, they will go against my) (tradition."(۱

:Purification {taharah} for prayer has the following stages

;Outward purification from impurities and pollutions .۱

;Purification of the bodily limbs from sins and offenses .۲

Spiritual purification from moral corruption(۲)—just as we read in supplications: "O .۳ "!Lord! Cleanse my heart of polytheism

If, at the time of prayer, it is necessary for the body and clothing to be clean from impurities, is it not essential for the heart and soul to be free of arrogance {kibr}, ?{ostentation {riya'}, envy {hasad}, and rancor {kinah

?{Will not inner pollution and outer cleanliness be a type of hypocrisy {nifaq

{Bathing {ghusl

Sometimes, instead of ablution one has to perform ghusl {ritual bathing}. One of these cases is ritual impurity caused by sexual intercourse {jinabah} and the entire body must be washed according to the rulings stated in the books on practical laws {risalah al-'amaliyyah}. Some hadiths indicate that during jinabah, sperm {mani} comes out from under every hair, all bodily parts and limbs—"min tahti kulli sha'r",(٣) unlike urine which has a specific and limited passageway. And perhaps this is the reason why in ghusl the entire body must be washed. These hadiths may also be referring to the activity of the sex-related cells at the time of jinabah as they exist and .are active in the entire body

{Dry purification {tayammum

If there is no water for ablution or taking a bath, or the time for ablution is limited, or the use of water is harmful to the health

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١- .Muhajjah al-Baydha', vol. ١, p. ٣٠١

٢- .Muhajjah al-Baydha', vol. ١, p. ٢٨١

٣- .Muhajjah al-Baydha', vol. ١, p. ٣٠٨; 'Uyun Akhbar ar-Rida, vol. ٢, p. ١٠۵

of the person, or the price of water is extremely exorbitant, or water is needed for .{drinking and saving a life, one must perform dry ablution {tayammum

That is, based on the instructions indicated in books on practical laws, one must strike both hands against clean earth and wipe the forehead and back of the hands. Clean !earth is necessary

We read in a hadith that Hadhrat 'Ali ('a) prohibited performing dry ablution on soil)taken from near the streets (which is usually unclean).(١

Clothing and place of the one praying

point

A male worshipper must cover his private parts {‘awrah} during prayer which is from the navel to the knees. The female worshipper must cover her entire body except the face, hands and feet up to the ankles.(۲)

This covering must also be done with clean and lawful clothing. It is better for the clothes of the one praying to be white, clean and fragrant smell and for the one praying to wear a ring with the ‘aqiq stone during prayer,(۳) and it is better for him not to use black, dirty and tight clothes, or the clothes of a person who is careless about the physical purity or impurity.(۴)

Similarly, the place carpet or thing upon which the prayer is performed must be acquired lawfully {halal}.(۵) The use of the fixed property of a deceased who owes khums(۶) or zakat is unlawful {haram} and praying there is invalid {batil}, and if a piece of land is purchased with a sum of money whose khums or zakat is

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۱- Wasa’il ash-shi’ah, vol.۳, p.۳۴۹. نَهى أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِين أَنْ تَيَمُّم الرَّجلُ بِتُرَابِ أثر الطَّرِيق

۲- Tawdhih al-Masa’il, Issue ۷۸۸.

۳- Tawdhih al-Masa’il, Issue ۷۸۹.

۴- Tawdhih al-Masa’il, Issue ۸۶۴.

۵- Tawdhih al-Masa’il, Issue ۸۶۶.

۶- Khums: literally means one-fifth. According to the Shi‘ah school of jurisprudence {fiqh}, this one-fifth tax is obligatorily levied on every adult Muslim who is financially secure and has surplus in his income out of annual savings, net commercial profits, and all movable and immovable properties which are not commensurable with the needs and social standing of the person. Khums is divided into two equal parts: the Share of the Imam {sahm al-Imam} and the Share of the Sayyids/Sadat (descendants of the Prophet) {sahm as-Sadat}. Accordingly, the Share of the Imam is to be paid to the living Imam, and in the period of occultation {‘asr al-ghaybah}, to the most learned living mujtahid who is the giver’s marja‘ at-taqlid {Source of Emulation}. The other half of the khums, the Share of the Sayyids/Sadat, is to be given to needy pious Sayyids who lack the resources for one’s year respectable living in consonance with

their various statuses. For more information, see Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi, Khums: An {.Islamic Tax, http://www.al-islam.org/beliefs/practices/khums.html [١٩]. {Trans

(not paid, it is unlawful to occupy it and invalid to pray there.(١

There are many issues pertaining to place and clothing. In addition to obedience and the spirit of submission to the divine commands, there are three other aspects which :we shall mention below

Observance of courtesy .١

The exigency of courtesy while standing in front of God in the precinct of His Glory and Grandeur demands that prayer must be performed with inner and outer purity and concentration. Even praying in front of the grave of the Holy Prophet (S) and Imams (('a) is sometimes regarded as an impolite gesture and makes the prayer invalid.(٢

Observance of the rights of others .٢

Some of these conditions are related to the observance of the rights of others. That the clothing and place of the one praying is lawful and legally acquired means to observe the right of the Islamic government (in levying khums) and the right of the society's deprived (in the payment of zakat) and other people. Even praying near (highways and along the streets is unlawful if it causes obstruction to pedestrians.(٣

The genuine satisfaction of the owner of rights is essential. If he outwardly says that he is satisfied (for us to occupy his place and pray there), but we know for certain that he is not, occupation of the place is unlawful, and the prayer offered there is invalid. On the contrary, if he outwardly expresses his lack of satisfaction, but we know for .certain that he is actually satisfied, to pray there is valid

Observance of priorities .٣

,Besides the main conditions

.Tawdhih al-Masa’il, Issue ۸۷۴ -۱

Tawdhih al-Masa’il, Issue ۸۸۴ -۲

.Tawdhih al-Masa’il, Issue ۸۹۸ -۳

there are some recommended {mustahabb} points that are indicative of Islam’s attention to priorities. For example, under ordinary and non-emergency situations the location of the one praying must not only be lawfully acquired, it must also be stable, flat and clean. Prayer in some places is emphasized more, such as in the mosque, .which shall be dealt with later

{Focus of direction in prayer {qiblah

Prayer is performed facing the Holy Ka‘bah (in Makkah) which is called the “qiblah”. Although God is everywhere, focusing on a single sacred point, such as the Ka‘bah, .(inspires monotheism and, is reminiscent of the monotheistic line of Ibrahim (‘a

For a Muslim the command is final, so all prayer must be performed facing the Ka‘bah, otherwise our worship would lack the spirit of obedience {ta‘abbud} and submission .{taslim} and hence be futile

During the early period of Islam, the qiblah of the Muslims for many years was Bayt al-Muqaddas (in Jerusalem). The Messenger of Allah (S) did not like the Ka‘bah, which was then a temple full of idols, to be set as the focus of direction in worship. After the migration {hijrah} (to Madinah), however, circumstances emerged that led to the change of the Muslims’ qiblah from Bayt al-Muqaddas to Masjid al-Haram (in Makkah). One of the reasons behind it was the insults and abuses suffered by the Muslims at the hands of the Jews (in Madinah), who were saying, “You do not have a ”.qiblah of your own and you are praying facing our qiblah

(The Messenger of Allah (S

was distressed by this situation and waiting for a way out from God. Until, verses of the Qur’an were revealed with the order, “Wherever you are, henceforth, face the

Masjid al-Haram and pray."(۱) The verses of the change of qiblah teach the Muslims throughout the history, that they should be independent and free; that they should not debase themselves in front of others even in matters of worship; and that they should live honorably with an identity of their own.

This command of the change of qiblah also served as a trial for the Muslims—to identify those who are totally obedient and subservient to the commands of God and the Prophet (S), and those who always question and complain.

Besides facing the Ka'bah while praying or reading the Qur'an, it is better for Muslims to face the Ka'bah while sleeping and eating; while slaughtering animals by placing them with faces toward the qiblah, otherwise their meat will become unlawful {haram}. This specification of direction in all affairs toward the ka'bah of monotheism makes it impossible for Muslims to be negligent of God in all their daily activities.

Moreover, this specification of direction toward the Ka'bah creates a wonderful order and stunning unity, when all Muslims, in whatever part of the world they may be, face toward that divine point at the time of prayer. If someone from space takes a look at those who are praying on earth, he will see numerous circles whose epicenter is the Ka'bah, and monotheism {tawhid} as

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۱- The lengthy verses concerning the change of qiblah are the verses ۱۴۲ up to ۱۴۹ of Surah al-Baqarah. See the exegesis of the verses for detail.

the central point in the minds, hearts and souls of Muslims.

Because of the attention to the qiblah, astronomy, geography and the detection of direction also flourished among the Muslims.

Yes, the Ka'bah is the memento of the monotheistic struggles of Ibrahim, Isma'il and Muhammad (may peace be upon them all). In his global uprising, Hadhrat al-Mahdi ('a) will also incline toward the Ka'bah and reform the world. It is this Ka'bah that is

.taken as the qiblah of every Muslim at the time of prayer and worship

{Call to prayer {Adhan

The recital of the call to prayer {Adhan} and iqamah(۱) is among the acts prior to the prayer and prepares the ground for greater attention to God during prayer.

The Adhan is a silence-breaking, rhythmical, short, substantial, and constructive message which is chanted, while repeating the most fundamental statements of faith and giving direction to the activities of Muslims.

The Adhan is the announcement of the existence of Islam, of the beliefs and deeds of Muslims, and a rejection of all false deities.

The Adhan is a sign of the openness of the propagation environment as well as the declaration of the intellectual stance of Muslims in a clear and lucid manner.

This monotheistic message is the first that is whispered to the new-born child and the initial lessons about God imparted to it. For adults, it has always acted as a warning against complacency.

(The Adhan is the only sound that reaches the inhabitants of heaven.(۲

(The Adhan is a sound that makes devils flee and feel dejected.(۳

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۱ - Iqamah: a shortened form of Adhan, heralding the commencement of prayer {salah}. {Trans.}

۲ - Kanz al-‘Ummal, vol. ۷, p. ۶۸۹.

۳ - Kanz al-‘Ummal, vol. ۷, p. ۶۹۲.

Reciting the Adhan with a beautiful voice and listening to the Adhan at home, particularly at the time of sickness, is strongly recommended.

In a hadith, the Messenger of Allah (S) has said:

سَيَأْتِی عَلَی النَّاسِ زَمَانٌ يَتْرُكُونَ الأَذَانَ عَلَی ضُعَفَائِهِمْ.

A time will come when the people will belittle the adhan and assign it to the weak“ (among them.”(1)

It is stated in a hadith that on the Day of Resurrection, when most of the people will be abased due to shame, the callers to prayer {mu’adhdhins} will be raised honorably with exalted statures (lofty stations).(2) The mu’adhdhin has a share in the reward of .those who prayed through the agency of his Adhan

Bilal

Bilal al-Habashi was a Muslim from Africa appointed by the Messenger of Allah (S) to be the mu’adhdhin. When the adhan was sent down through a revelation, the Prophet (S) taught it to Bilal who had a strong voice.(3) That the Prophet (S) designated him to :be the mu’adhdhin has some lessons for us, among which are the following

1. Giving identity and honor to slaves, for Bilal was a slave who became a mouthpiece ;of Islam and harbinger of the ummah

2. ;{Giving identity to blacks, proving that color of the skin is not a criterion {of piety

3. Condemning the arrogant disparagement and ridicule of Bilal by the polytheists and (hypocrites, and their pretension of generosity and boasting;(4

4. True faith, piety and merit compensate for external shortcomings of expression. and (س) ”as “s (ش) ”Although Bilal used to pronounce “sh

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1- .Kanz al-‘Ummal, vol. 7, p. 690

2- .Wasa’il ash-Shi‘ah, vol. 4, p. 615

3- .Wasa’il ash-Shi‘ah, vol. 4, p. 612

4- In this regard, see Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 21, p. 133 where the abusive words of the .polytheists uttered against Bilal have been mentioned

had this pronunciation defect, God laid more emphasis on his spiritual perfection and .inner beauty

Bilal was the first person in Islam to recite the adhan.(۱) He believed in the Prophet (S) at the very beginning of the Prophetic mission and for the sake of his faith, he endured the severest tortures under the scorching heat of the sun in the deserts of .{Hijaz by repeating "ahad, ahad" {(God is) One, (God is) One

During the conquest of Makkah, at noontime {zuhr} Bilal also climbed on top of the Ka'bah as ordered by the Prophet (S) and recited the adhan, after the idols were (shattered.(۲

.Bilal participated in the Battles of Badr, Uhud and Khandaq

After the Messenger of Allah (S), he did not recite the adhan for any one else. He recited the adhan only when requested by Hadhrat Zahra ('a) who missed the time of her father. While Bilal was still halfway in his adhan, the people and Hadhrat Zahra ('a) (wept.(۳

This conduct of Bilal demonstrated that the adhan must only be recited for the sake of .truth and at the time of deserving leader

One day, 'Umar (ibn al-Khattab) said to Bilal: "It was Abu Bakr who bought you and set "?you free. Why do you not recite the adhan for the prayer he is leading

Bilal replied: "If he freed me to earn for himself the pleasure of God, I owe him nothing. However, if he had some other motive, then I am ready to be his slave but I will

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."Safinah al-Bahar, vol. ۱, under the word "Bilal -۱

.Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۴, p. ۶۱۴ -۲

."Safinah al-Bahar, vol. ۱, under the word "Bilal -۳

never recite the adhan for someone whose caliphate was not endorsed by the Prophet (S).”(1)

Bilal was not even willing to recite the adhan, which is a religious message to encourage an army which he did not recognize as being rightfully guided.

Bilal—that Ethiopian slave attained such a position under the auspices of faith that he became the herald of the Apostle’s (S) itinerary and the public treasurer.(2)

If at the time of prayer, students throughout Europe and America recite the adhan, will they not make people reflect?

This brings to mind the late Martyr Nawwab Safawi(3) who urged his companions to recite the adhan at noontime {zuhr} and sunset {maghrib} wherever they may be. It was this very adhan that struck fear and terror at the heart of the taghuti system (Pahlavi monarchy). This is the meaning of the hadith which states, “On hearing the adhan, Satan gets furious and flees.”(4)

It is not without reason that Gladstone(5) (a British statesman) said before the British Parliament: “So long as the name of Muhammad is recited from the top of minarets, the Ka‘bah exists, and the Qur’an is the guide of Muslims, it will be impossible to implement our policies in Muslim territories.”(6)

It is because of its rich content and constructive monotheistic dimensions that its recitation is strongly recommended in announcing prayer.

Intention {niyyah}

point

Since intention {niyyah} is the criterion of value in every act including worship, it is the first obligatory act in prayer. Considering its importance, a separate and lengthy chapter

."Safinah al-Bahar, vol. ۱, under the word "Bilal -۱

."Lughatnameh-ye Dehkhoda, under the word "Bilal -۲

Martyr Sayyid Mujtaba Nawwab Safawi was the founder of Fada'iyan-e Islam - ۳ organization, which was established in ۱۳۲۳ AHS (circa ۱۹۴۴) and one of the religious parties and organizations in Iran at the time with a long record of sound faith in Islam and in the role of the 'ulama' in leading the people. The assassination of 'Abd al-Husayn Hajir and General Razmara (the Shah's Prime Ministers) was one of this group's militant undertakings. Nawwab Safawi and other members of the group were arrested by the Shah's agents in ۱۳۴۴ AHS (circa ۱۹۶۵) and were expeditiously tried and {.executed. {Trans

.Kanz al-'Ummal, vol. ۷, p. ۶۹۲ -۴

{.It refers to the British Secretary of State for the Colonies at the time. {Trans -۵

.Tafsir Nemuneh, vol. ۴, p. ۴۳۸, under verse ۵۸ of Surah al-Ma'idah -۶

has been included for the examination of its dimensions, with the hope that by doing .so, we would succeed in giving more value to all devotional acts

Intention {niyyah} as the criterion of value

The element that gives importance to a person's action is his intention, motive or objective. So, in the verses of the Qur'an, the phrase "in the way of Allah" {fi sabilillah} is often used (seventy times), and thus a warning for people to ensure that their actions and intentions be in the way of God, and not for the sake of other than God or .their own carnal desires

Like a dangerous read in which many signboards have been set up, servitude of God is also like a way which has many precipices; and all of these emphasizes is a warning for avoiding deviations. This is particularly true with respect to devotional acts which .without the purest of intentions, lose all hope of seeking nearness to God

Intention is the pillar of worship. If an action is done without intention, or has an .{ungodly intention behind it, it will be invalid {batil

Intention is the pillar of worship and the essence and foundation of action. The most

sacred acts are spoiled because of the mixed intentions behind them, while the simplest acts gain in value on account of the purely good intentions behind them. Anyone who strives in the way of God will also be guided by God toward His path:

(وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا)

"As for those who strive in Us,

p: ٨٧

We shall surely guide them in Our ways."(١)

Intention is the indispensable prerequisite for the acceptance of a deed. Imam as-Sadiq ('a) quotes a statement of God, the Exalted:

لَمْ أَقْبَلْ إِلاَّ مَا كَانَ خَالِصًا لى.

"I do not accept anyone except the one who is sincere to Me."(٢)

Intention magnifies a small deed. Imam as-Sadiq ('a) said:

مَنْ أَرَادَ الله بِالْقَلِيلِ مِنْ عَمَلِهِ أَظْهَرَهُ اللهُ أَكْثَرَ مِمَّا أَرَادَ، وَ مَنْ أَرَادَ النَّاسَ بِالْكَثِيرِ مِنْ عَمَلِهِ أَبَى اللهُ إِلاَّ أَنْ يُقَلِّلَهُ فى عَيْنِ مَنْ سَمِعَهُ.

"Anyone who performs a small act for the sake of God, God will make it bigger than he wishes in the sight of others. And anyone who performs a great act for the sake of people, God will make it trivial in the sight of others."(٣)

Yes, honor {'izzah} and disgrace {dhillah} are in the hands of God, and it is He who draws hearts toward a person. So, one must work for Him to set works right.

For the sake of God, Hadhrat Ibrahim ('a) left his wife and son in the scorching desert of Makka. He then asked God to draw the hearts of people toward them.(٤) The Holy Qur'an also states:

(إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَ عَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَيَجْعَلُ لَهُمُ الرَّحْمَنُ وُدًّا)

"Indeed those who have faith and do righteous deeds—the All-beneficent will endear

them {to His creation}."(5)

This is one of God's worldly rewards. Of course, God-given love is different from the fleeting and false popularity among people. So many famous people are forgotten after their death, and so many unknown

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۱- Surah 'Ankabut ۲۹:۶۹.
۲- Rawdhah al-Muttaqin, vol. ۱۲, p. ۱۴۱.
۳- Rawdhah al-Muttaqin, vol. ۱۲, p. ۱۴۲.
۴- Surah Ibrahim ۱۴:۳۷: "Our Lord! ...So make the hearts of a part of the people fond of them (Abraham's descendants), and provide them with fruits, that they may give thanks."
۵- Surah Maryam ۱۹:۹۶.

persons remain alive in the hearts of so many people!

So, popularity must also be sought through God, as He is the Transformer of Hearts {muqallib al-qulub} and the hearts of people are in His hands. If someone works sincerely for the sake of God, God will compensate his sincerity in a manner beyond his expectations.(1)

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) said:

أَلْقَلْبُ حَرَمُ اللهِ وَ لاَ تُسْكِنُوا حَرَمَ اللهِ غَيْرِ الله.

"The heart is the sanctuary of Allah; so do not allow anyone to dwell therein except Allah."(2)

Examples of sincerity {ikhlas}

'Ali ('a) said regarding an attribute of the pious {muttaqin}:

إِذَا زكّى أَحَدُهُم خَافَ مِمَّا يُقَالُ لَهُ.

(When anyone of them is spoken of highly, he is afraid of what is said about him."(۳"

The righteous men are afraid that the people's attention toward them may obstruct their attention to God, and this is what is referred to by "alladhina yasudduna 'an ."sabilillah

One night, an interview with a ۱۶ year-old war veteran was shown on Iranian TV. The interviewer asked: "What is your occupation?" Answer: "Detonation of land mines." Question: "How many mines have you detonated so far?" Answer: "By the grace of God, many." Question: "Do you know exactly how many?" Answer: "I am afraid to tell lest Satan inflict me with self-admiration {'ujb} and arrogance {ghurur} and make my friends, who have detonated a smaller number of mines, feel belittled." Allah is the !{greatest {Allahu akbar

Another example: It has been narrated that one of the students of the late Ayatullah Sayyid 'Abd al-Hadi ash-Shirazi raised an objection about

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Imam Khomeini (may his soul be sanctified) staged an uprising for the sake of God, -۱ was banished and endured so many sufferings prior to the victory of the Islamic Revolution. God also drew the hearts of millions of people toward him. When he came back to Iran after more than a decade of banishment, millions of people welcomed him, and when he passed away, ten million people participated in his burial ceremony. Within forty days the people built his shrine and courtyard, and from the furthest .points in the country they came to Tehran on foot, to pay homage to him

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۷۰, p. ۲۵ -۲

.Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon ۱۹۳ -۳

a lesson. Although the teacher calmly replied to it, he refused to accept it. After the class session, the student stayed back to talk to the teacher and reiterate his .objection

The late Shirazi satisfied him with ۱۴ logical reasons. The other students, who

observed the logical strength of the teacher's argument, asked: "Having all these solid reasons, why did you hesitate during the class session?"

Ayatullah Shirazi responded: "I was afraid that if I would enumerate them, the morale of your classmate would be arbitrarily affected and I would suffer from self-admiration and arrogance. I deemed it appropriate to let him raise his objection freely so that the courage to question should remain intact in him."

This demonstrates greatness of soul and purity of intention. In spite of all those services, some do not talk about themselves while others, whenever they donate garbage can for the streets and alleys, inscribe their names on it so that people know what they have contributed. Divine saints act and worship God for His sake and expect nothing but His pleasure.

Each of their acts has the divine color {sibghah}, which is everlasting.(۱) And which color can be better than divine color, which can never be erased, nor affected by heat and cold, poverty and wealth, anonymity and popularity?

Imam 'Ali ('a) said:

أَخْلِصْ لِلهِ عَمَلَکَ وَ عِلْمَکَ وَ بُغْضَکَ وَ أَخْذَکَ وَ تَرکَکَ وَ کَلامَکَ وَ صُمْتَکَ.

"Purify your work, knowledge, anger, acceptance, refusal, speech and silence for the sake of Allah."(۲)

By means

۱- Surah al-Baqarah ۲:۱۳۸: ""The baptism of Allah {sibghat Allah}, and who baptizes better than Allah? And Him do we worship."

۲- Fihrist Ghurar al-Hikam, under the word "ikhlas" {sincerity or purity}.

of this, deeds and their effects shall remain, and whatever has the divine reflection and visage is everlasting: "Everything is to perish except His Face."(۱)

And whatever is colored with ostentation and self-glorification will fade and nothing will be left for the individual.

Sincerity in worship {'ibadah}

All acts of worship must be done with the intention of seeking nearness {qurbah} (to Allah) and if a part of them is for the sake of other than God, they all become invalid. For example, if one of the obligatory acts in prayer is done for the sake of other than God, the entire prayer becomes invalid.

If one of the supererogatory acts is also done ostentatiously, or the time of worship (performance at its first and best period), or its place (in the first row or in the mosque) is for the sake of other than God, the prayer is invalid. During winter, standing beside a heater so as to keep one's body warm as well as to pray, invalidates the prayer.

God accepts an act which is pure and sincere in terms of its location and time requirements, quality and peculiarity, and in which no partner is associated with Him:

"And not associate anyone with the worship of his Lord."(2)

It is stated in a hadith, thus: "If a warrior goes to war for the sake of bigotry {ta'assub}, acquisition of war booties, or show of strength and bravery, and the like, his struggle has no value."(3)

Sincerity, or freedom from ostentation is crucial for acceptance. In

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١- Surah al-Qasas ٢٨:٨٨.

٢- Surah al-Kahf ١٨:١١٠.

٣- Muhajjah al-Baydha', vol. ۶, p. ١٧١.

a hadith Imam al-'Askari(1) ('a) said: "The penetration of polytheism {shirk} in the works of man is more subtle than the movement of an ant on a dark night on a black

rock."(۲)

There are many succinct aphorisms on sincerity by 'Ali ('a). Here are just some of them:

"Pure intention is the ideal end and final aim."

"Sincerity is righteousness."

"Faith means purification of one's work."

"Purity is the highest stage of faith."

"All efforts are naught except that which has sincerity."

"The fruit of knowledge is purity of action."

"The acceptance and exaltation of deeds depends on sincerity."

"If intentions are pure, actions acquire loftiness and exaltation."

"He who is sincere (in his work) shall realize his aspirations."(۳)

And there are still many hadiths that indicate the sublime status that sincerity and pure intention give to actions and deeds in this world and in the hereafter.

Worldly effects of intention

point

Apart from otherworldly rewards and spiritual benefits, sincerity also has some worldly effects, which we shall examine below:

۱. Management of the society

If the administrators of society conduct their affairs with goodness of intention and sincerity, better results can be achieved and justice can be observed. 'Ali ('a) said to Malik al-Ashtar:(۴) "For the implementation of social justice, seek assistance from the

(people with good intentions ."(5)

The spirit of sincere benevolence is the strongest foundation for the implementation of justice.

2. Improvement of economic conditions

Kind-hearted, benevolent and sincere individuals are more successful even in economic and occupational affairs, and their sincerity supports social prestige, customer attraction and people's trust in dealing with them. Perhaps, this statement of 'Ali ('a) is related to

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1- Imam Hasan al-'Askari (845-872 CE): the eleventh Imam from the Prophet's Progeny, spent most of his life in the prisons of the 'Abbasid caliphs, al-Muhtadi, al-Mu'taz and al-Mu'tamid. Imam al-'Askari was at times incarcerated and at others kept in close confinement in his home in Samirra under the watchful eye of the caliph. It is for this reason that he and his father are known as the 'askarayn because their house was constantly surrounded by the soldiers (Arabic='askarun) of the 'Abbasid government. {Trans.}

2- Tuhaf al-'Uqul, p. 487.

3- These hadiths are taken from Fihrist Ghurar al-Hikam, under the word "ikhlas" {{sincerity or purity}}.

4- Malik al-Ashtar: more fully, Malik ibn Harith from Nakha' and famous as al-Ashtar, was among the prominent commanders of Imam 'Ali's army and the governor appointed to Egypt by Imam 'Ali. He accompanied the Imam in the Battles of Jamal and Siffin. On his way to Egypt, he was killed through the conspiracy of Mu'awiyah. For the text of the Imam's famous instructions to him before setting forth to Egypt, see Nahj al-Balaghah, Letter 53. A complete translation is contained in William C. Chittick, A Shi'ite Anthology (Albany, N.Y., 1980), pp. 68-82.

5- Nahj al-Balaghah, Letter 53.

this issue, "The sustenance of every person is commensurate with his intention."(1)

Good social relations .۳

Good-natured and well-intentioned persons are held in high esteem by people, and even if they commit a mistake, their lives will not become bitter and the people will still love them because of their sincerity and goodness of intention. 'Ali ('a) has said: "Anyone who has good intentions has a greater chance of success, while his life is purer, and it is necessary to befriend him."(۲)

This is the amazing effect of righteous intention. On the contrary, if intentions are wicked and mischievous, their consequences will affect the person himself, and in addition to otherworldly consequences, social calamities will also follow. 'Ali ('a) says: "When the intention is corrupt, affliction will come."(۳)

Firm intentions and good motives will get important work done even from those who are considered incapable. If the motive is strong and divine, there will be no apathy, hesitation, or despair. For this reason, depression and cowardice cannot be observed in any of the divine saints, even in their old age, because their hearts and souls were replete with pure, divine intentions, seeking help from God in all predicaments and crises, against all enemies and powers. An illustrious example is the Imam of the ummah (may his soul be sanctified) who with a tranquil heart in constant remembrance of God forced the superpowers to surrender.

On the day of 'Ashura', in spite of facing the martyrdoms of his beloved ones and foreseeing the inhuman treatment of his

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۱- Fihrist Ghurar al-Hikam, p. ۳۹۸.

۲- intention} Fihrist Ghurar al-Hikam, p. ۳۹۹, under the word "niyyah" {.

۳- intention} Fihrist Ghurar al-Hikam, p. ۳۹۸, under the word "niyyah" {.

family, the more Imam al-Husayn ('a) became isolated, the more his countenance became illuminated with the fire of love, totally relying on God and saying: "That which makes these severities easy for me is that I can see everything in the Presence of

".God, and He watches and bears witness

Imam 'Ali ('a) has said: "When intention is strong and firm, the body will not become weary."(1)

Perhaps, this refers to the psychological and emotional effects of intention in man's conduct and behavior.

{Intention as an action {'amal

The decision to do good deeds and to have good intentions releases man from a state of indifference, and it has a value equal to the act itself, in addition to the divine reward for it.

The Messenger of Allah (S) said to Abu Dharr: "Resolve to perform noble deeds. Even if you fail in doing so, at least you will not be included among the negligent."(2)

And Imam as-Sadiq ('a) said: "A good deed will be recorded in favor of anyone who decides to do something good but fails to do so."(3)

Concerning the aspiration to attain martyrdom, the Prophet of Islam (S) said: "Anyone who, out of sincerity and uprightness, prays for martyrdom, God will include him in the company of martyrs on the Day of Resurrection even if he dies in bed."(4)

Intention as compensation for deficiencies

Since the knowledge, power and faculties of man are limited, he cannot acquire all he wants. But intention fills the gap between "man's endless needs" and his "limited faculties". For example, if someone intends and wishes to guide all

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۱- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۷۰, p. ۲۰۵.

۲- Muhajjah al-Baydha', vol. ۵, p. ۷۵.

۳- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۷۰, p. ۱۹۹.

۴- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۷۰, p. ۲۰۱.

the misguided people around him and strives hard to do so but fails, he will be rewarded for the said intention.

On the other hand, bad intentions go beyond time and place circumstances, and affect the doer of evil deeds. If a person accepts the corruption, sin and tyranny of others and is pleased with them, he shares their sins.

The Holy Qur'an attributes the killing of the she-camel of Hadhrat Salih ('a), that was a divine miracle, to all those who opposed him.(١) Although all of them did not have a hand in the said crime, they were pleased with the act.

So, to be pleased with a good or evil act carries man beyond time and space and lets him share in its reward or consequence. And this fact has been mentioned in numerous traditions.

Ways of acquiring sincerity

point

Some of the ways of acquiring sincerity in intention and action are as follows:

١. Attention to values

Those who sell their commodity cheaply, do not realize its worth because they fail to identify the commodity as iron or gold, silk or cotton; they do not recognize the customer; and they are unaware of the commodity's current market price. The Glorious Qur'an has guided man in all three areas so that he does not sell his valuable commodity at a throw-away price:

"Commodity": The Qur'an regards man as the vicegerent {khalifah} of God as well as the essence and aim of creation—the highest status.

"Customer": It is God Himself who buys man's excellent deeds(٢) and He offers the best bargains compared to other customers:

١.

۱- Surah al-A'raf ۷:۷۷: "So they hamstrung the She-camel and defied the command of their Lord, and they said, O Salih, bring us what you threaten us with, if you are one of the apostles." {Trans.}

۲- It refers to Surah at-Tawbah (or al-Bara'ah) ۹:۱۱۱: "Indeed Allah has brought from the faithful their souls and their possessions for paradise to be theirs: they fight in the way of Allah, kill, and the are killed. A promise binding upon Him in the Torah and the Evangel and the Qur'an. And who is truer to his promise than Allah? So rejoice in the bargain you have made with Him, and that is the great success."

He pays the most (in return for the Paradise);

۲. He accepts small deeds;(۱)

۳. He rewards good intentions; and

۴. He conceals wicked and corrupt acts and manifests good deeds.(۲)

"Price": The price of man is paradise and divine pleasure, and anyone who sells himself for less, actually incurs a loss. And in the words of the Qur'an, the sinners have lost and gambled themselves away {khasaru anfusihim}.

The Qur'an has always mentioned those who are going astray with the description, "famara bihat tijaratuhum," i.e. their business has acquired no gain.

Imam 'Ali ('a) also said:

لَبِئْسَ الْمَتْجَرُ أَنْ تَرى الدُّنْيا لِنَفْسِکَ ثَمَناً.

"What a bad business it is that you would regard the world as your price and rate!"(۳)

If man is aware of his price, he will not work for the sake of other than God.

۲. Reflecting on creation

Reflecting on creation enhances our cognition of the grandeur and power of God, and

as a result, we direct our deeds toward Him with greater sincerity and purity of .intention

Attention to the Attributes of God .۳

Learning, reciting and remembering the Attributes of God, the Exalted, keeps our focus in the right direction, detaches us from all besides Him, and gradually elevates us. For example, examining closely the Names and Attributes of God in the Jawshan .Kabir Supplication can be a truly great purifying experience

Attention to His blessings .۴

Recognizing the blessings of God and paying attention to them draw man toward God and make his heart the sanctuary of His love.(۴) For this reason, In Islamic supplications and litanies of the Infallibles ('a) these favors have been repeatedly mentioned and

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۱- Surah az-Zilzal ۹۹:۷: "So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it."

۲- For example, we recite in a supplication: "O He who shows good and conceals evil!"

۳- Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon ۳۲.

۴- Surah al-Baqarah ۲:۱۶۴: "Those who believe are stauncher in their love for Allah."

.recollected

For instance, in the Abu Hamzah ath-Thumali Supplication, Imam as-Sajjad ('a) :enumerates the blessings one by one

;O God! I was small but You made me big

;I was contemptible but You gave me honor

;I was ignorant but You made me aware

;I was hungry but You fed me

;I was naked but You covered me

;I was misguided but You guided me

;I was indigent but You made me free of want

;I was sick but You healed me

.I committed sin but You concealed it

And the list is endless. Imam al-Husayn ('a) also embarks on mentioning the blessings of God in the Du'a' al-'Arafah so that the love of God remains alive in his heart, and all .his work is purely for His sake and pleasure

Attention to the sure gain .۵

Those who strive for the sake of the world and other than God may or may not attain their objective. The gain and outcome of the works of those who strive in the way of :God and the hereafter, however, are certain. The Glorious Qur'an states

(وَ مَنْ أَرَادَ الْآخِرَهَ وَ سَعَى لَهَا سَعْيَهَا وَ هُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُوْلَئِكَ كَانَ سَعْيُهُم مَّشْكُورًا)

Whoever desires the Hereafter and strives for it with an effort worthy of it, should he" (be faithful—the endeavor of such will be well-appreciated."(۱

.Then the effort and worship in the way of God surely gives result

Attention to worthlessness of the world .۶

Those who have worldly and other-than-God objectives value the world more than its actual worth. There are expressions in the Holy Qur'an which mention the worthlessness, deceptive nature, transitory and arrogance-generating quality of the

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.Surah al-Isra' (or Bani Isra'il) ۱۷:۱۹ -۱

world, such as,"mata'u'l-ghurur," "la'ibun wa lahwun," "zahrat al-hayat ad-dunya' "

."and "mata'u'd-dunya qalilun

Such are the expressions of the Creator of the universe who knows the nature of the world better than anybody else. He, who is not seduced and charmed by the world .and does not desire it, is the one who will attain purity

Attention to impotence of created beings .٧

Absolute power belongs to God Almighty and none other than Him. Therefore, anyone .who is created by God is not worthy of being the focus of attention or worship

In the expression of the Glorious Qur'an, the false deities are incapable of creating :even a single fly.(١) And concerning the impotence of mankind, it states

(وَ مَنْ أَرَادَ الْآخِرَةَ وَ سَعَىٰ لَهَا سَعْيَهَا وَ هُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ كَانَ سَعْيُهُمْ مَشْكُورًا)

"Whoever desires the Hereafter and strives for it with an effort worthy of it, should he (be faithful—the endeavor of such will be well-appreciated."(٢

:In another place, it poses these questions

(قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمُ اللَّيْلَ سَرْمَدًا إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ مَنْ إِلَٰهٌ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ يَأْتِيكُمْ بِضِيَاءٍ ۖ أَفَلَا تَسْمَعُونَ قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمُ النَّهَارَ سَرْمَدًا إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ مَنْ إِلَٰهٌ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ يَأْتِيكُمْ بِلَيْلٍ تَسْكُنُونَ فِيهِ ۖ أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ)

"Say, 'Tell me, if Allah were to make the night perpetual over you until the Day of Resurrection, what god other than Allah could bring you light? Will you not then listen?' Say, 'Tell me, if Allah were to make the day perpetual over you until the Day of

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Surah al-Hajj ٢٢:٧٣: "Lo! Those on whom ye call beside Allah will never create a fly -١ ".though they combine together for the purpose

.Surah al-Mulk ٦٧:٣٠ -٢

Resurrection, what god other than Allah could bring you night wherein you could rest? (Will you not then perceive?'"(١

Even those who have been associated with God as His partners can do nothing in the world and in the hereafter. Those who are worshipping deities other than God on the Day of Resurrection they will regret pleasing those who were impotent and powerless.

In addition, pleasing the One and Only God who is "easy to be pleased" {sari' ar-Rida} is easier than pleasing numerous deities and countless objects of worship which involve many difficulties.

۸. Learning from the experiences of others

Many of those who focused their attention on other than God, met a painful and dismal fate. Taking one look at their fate can teach man the futility of worshipping anyone other than God.

The son of Nuh (Noah) ('a) who turned his back on God and relied on the mountain's height to be saved from the flood was helplessly drowned in the great deluge.(۲)

Qarun (Korah) did not pay heed to the sincere invitation of Hadhrat Musa (Moses) ('a) and took pride in his abundant wealth, but he was miserably swallowed by the earth and none of his supporters was able to rescue him:

"So We caused the earth to swallow him and his dwelling place. Then he had no host to help him against Allah, nor was he of those who can save themselves."(۳)

Many rich and affluent garden owners went away and left behind all the things they had accumulated. All their wealth was of no avail.

"How

۱- Surah al-Qasas ۲۸:۷۱-۷۲.

۲- Surah Hud ۱۱:۴۲-۴۳: "Noah called out his son, who stood aloof, 'O my son! Board with us, and do not be with the faithless!' He said, 'I shall take refuge on a mountain; it will

protect me from the flood.' He said, 'There is none today who can protect from Allah's edict, except someone upon whom He has mercy.' Then the waves came between {.them, and he was among those who were drowned." {Trans

.Surah al-Qasas ۲۸:۸۱ -۳

many gardens and springs did they leave behind! Fields and splendid places, and the (bounties wherein they rejoiced!"(۱

God exposed and unveiled the true nature of so many who deceptively showed :themselves for sometime to be sincere and pious

(And Allah brought forth that which you were hiding."(۲"

Those who want to dupe the people and deceive God by means of ostentation and pretension, the divine scheme will encompass them and they will be exposed. There are numerous examples of such people. Their end is instructive for anyone who .wishes to keep aloof from pretension and deception

Attention to final end of hypocrites in the hereafter .۹

The Holy Qur'an regards the fire of hell as meant for pretentious worshippers who (are actually careless about their prayers.(۳

It is stated in a hadith that on the Day of Resurrection, the dissembler will be called by .{four names: unbeliever {kafir}, impious {fajir}, traitor {ghadir}, and loser {khasir

.He will be called kafir because in terms of belief, he has not taken God into account

He will be named fajir since flouting God's commands is going beyond the purpose of .creation

.He will be labeled ghadir for being deceptive

.He will be branded khasir, for the outcome of his whole lifetime was nothing

Then, it shall be said to them: "Your deeds were invalid and thus have no corresponding rewards. Today, get your rewards from those for the sake of whose

(pleasure you were working."(۴

Therefore, attention to the regret of dissemblers in the hereafter, brings man nearer .to sincerity

Sound intentions

point

Purity of intention and the motive of seeking nearness

.Surah ad-Dukhan ۴۴:۲۵-۲۷ -۱

.Surah al-Baqarah ۲:۷۲ -۲

Surah al-Ma'un ۱۰۷:۴-۶: "Ah, woe unto worshippers who are heedless of their - ۳ ".(prayer; who would be seen (at worship

.Safinah al-Bahar, vol. ۱, p. ۴۹۹ -۴

qurbah} to God can assume various forms. Of course, some forms are more valuable} :than others. Some of these forms are as follows

Fear of the Divine Station and Court .۱

Doing good and avoiding evil is sometimes due to fear of hell and hardships on the Day of Resurrection. Regarding the Commander of the Faithful and Hadhrat Fatimah's ('a) sincere act of feeding the helpless, the orphan and the prisoner, the :Glorious Qur'an states

(إِنَّا نَخَافُ مِنْ رَبِّنَا يَوماً عَبُوساً قَمْطَرِيرًا)

(Indeed we fear from our Lord a day, frowning and fateful."(۱"

Hope for reward .۲

Divine reward is also a sound intention for worship. The Holy Qur'an has also mentioned in hundreds of verses the pleasures of paradise as a reward for the

righteous ones. In numerous traditions, otherworldly rewards for righteous deeds .have also been mentioned, and these rewards generate motives in man

Gratitude for blessings .٣

Gratitude for the infinite blessings of God is also one of the righteous intentions in :worship. 'Ali (ʻa) has said

لَوْ لَمْ یَتَوَعَّدَ اللهُ عَلیٰ مَعْصِیَتِهِ لَکانَ یَجِبُ اَلا یُعْصیٰ شُکْراً لِنِعْمَتِهِ.

Even if Allah had not warned of chastisement those disobedient to Him, it was" obligatory by way of gratitude for his favors that He should not be disobeyed."(٢)

{'Modesty {haya .۴

Sometimes, the motive for the performance or abandonment of an act is to avoid feeling ashamed before God. When man believes in the Presence of God in the universe and recognizes Him as Witness over him, he will not cheat and commit sins :out of respect for God. It is stated in a hadith, thus

أَعْبُدُ اللهَ کَأَنَّکَ تَراهُ، فَإِنْ لَمْ

.Surah al-Insan (or, ad-Dahr) ٧۶:١٠ -١

.Nahj al-Balaghah, Saying ٢٣٧ -٢

تکن تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّهُ یَرَاکَ.

Worship God as if you can see Him. Even if you cannot see Him, He can surely see" you."(١)

Love of God .۵

Those worshippers whose worship is motivated by love and affection and who believe that God is worthy of being worshipped are few and far between. The Commander of the Faithful (ʻa) said, as recorded in Nahj al-Balaghah: "A group of people worship God

out of desire for reward; this is the worship of traders. Another group worships God out of fear; this is the worship of slaves. Yet another group worships God out of gratitude; this is the worship of free men."(٢) About himself he stated in litanies ".{munajat}: "O God! I found You worthy of worship and I worshipped You

On the Day of Resurrection, human beings will be raised up according to their intentions. The Messenger of Allah (S) has said: "Verily, the people will be resurrected (on the basis of their intentions."(٣

{The university of wisdom {hikmah

Sincerity {ikhlas} is a quality the practice of which results in wisdom {hikmah} par excellence within a period of forty days, after which an unbelievable stage of insight :{basirah} and certainty {yaqin} will be

مَنْ أَخْلَصَ الْعِبادَهِ لله أَرْبَعِيْنَ صَباحاً ظَهَرتْ يَنابيعُ الْحِكْمَهَ مِنْ قَلْبِهِ عَلىٰ لِسانِه.

He who sincerely worships Allah for forty days, springs of wisdom shall flow from his" (heart to his tongue."(۴

The root of sincerity

The fact that one is suffering from ostentation means that one has not yet attained .the stage of certainty {yaqin} and faith

Imam 'Ali ('a) said: "Sincerity is the product

١- Misbah ash-Shari'ah, p. ٨. {Trans.}

٢- Nahj al-Balaghah, Saying ٢٩٠.

٣- Muhajjah al-Baydha', vol. ۵, p. ٧٧.

۴- Jami' as-Sa'adat, vol. ٢, p. ٧٧; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۵٣, p. ٣٢۶.

(of certainty."(١

It is possible for man to have knowledge of God, the hereafter, spiritual reward, etc. but as long as knowledge has not reached the stage of certainty and faith, it will not have the necessary effect. Everybody knows that the dead are incapable of doing .anything, but in spite of this knowledge, so many are afraid of a corpse

Although a pretender is possibly aware of God, the Day of Resurrection, accountability and the book of deeds, since, his awareness has not reached the stage of certainty he will go away from sincerity. This certainty. is also available through :worship. The Holy Qur'an states

(وَاعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ حَتَّى يَأْتِيَكَ الْيَقِينُ)

(And worship your Lord until certainty (or death) comes to you."(٢"

If we are certain that the universe has the Presence of God; that honor and disgrace are in His hand; and that the world and its manifestations are trivial, fleeting and .deceptive assets, we will be drawn toward sincerity in action

Signs of sincerity

point

There are so many who regard themselves as "sincere" in intention and action, but if they examine themselves closely, they will find ungodly intentions in their actions. Therefore, we shall point out some signs of sincerity on the basis of the Qur'an and :hadith

Not expecting anything from others .١

A pertinent example which the Glorious Qur'an mentions is Hadhrat 'Ali and Fatimah's ('a) act of feeding the needy. Imam al-Hasan and Imam al-Husayn ('a) fell ill during childhood. The Prophet (S) and a group of the companions went to pay him a visit

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.Fihrist Ghurar al-Hikam -١

.Surah al-Hijr ۱۵:۹۹ -۲

and recommended to 'Ali ('a) to make a vow {nadhr} for their sons' recovery. 'Ali and .Fatimah ('a) vowed to fast for three consecutive days if their children recovered

Their two children recovered by the Grace of God. In fulfillment of their vow, 'Ali and Fatimah ('a) fasted. These two personages could hardly find bread to bake at home. At the time of breaking the fast {iftar} on the first day, a blind man came and knocked .at their door. They gave him their food, and broke their fast with water

The same happened on the second and third day. The couple, who had fasted for three days without any food visited the Prophet while turning pale. Surah ad-Dahr (or :al-Insan) was revealed about them which points out this sincere act

(إِنَّمَا نُطْعِمُكُم لِوَجْهِ اللهِ لاَ نُرِيدُ مِنْكُم جَزَاءً وَ لاَ شُكُورًا)

Saying,} 'We feed you only for the sake of Allah. We do not want any reward from}" (you nor any thanks."(۱

They offered food out of sincerity and solely for the sake of God; feeding the poor was routine with them; they gave the food they liked; they were never tired of guests or beggars nor did they get them annoyed with; and they also did not expect any .token of gratitude from them

It is possible for man to do something sometimes without any monetary benefit, but .he would like to advertise what he has done in the community

Sometimes, a person says that he is not expecting any compensation

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.Surah al-Insan (or, ad-Dahr) ۷۶:۹ -۱

.but his heart actually yearns for it

Sometimes, if one's good deeds and activities are not acknowledged, he feels

discouraged and annoyed, and if a gesture of gratitude is not rendered, he will nurse .a grudge

These are signs of the absence of sincerity. Sincere is he, in whose performance of duty, criticism and appreciation of the people have no effect, and he fulfills his duty whether the people know it and express appreciation for it, or remain uninformed of .it

Focusing on duty, not title .۲

Another sign of sincerity is that one is looking for an action which is necessary, an obligation undone, though it does not entail money, title and fame, and will not increase his welfare, income and social standing; for example, rendering service in deprived regions or small and far-off villages and areas with bad climate, or engage in .necessary works which do not have much social prestige but are obligatory

Once, during my youth, I had classes with children and adolescents. Along the way, if youngsters joined me, I would feel some sense of pride, but if kids followed me, I would feel somewhat embarrassed. I used to pass by a small marketplace. One day, an illiterate old man came out of a store and said to me: "Are you teaching for the sake of God?" I was sure that I was, since I was not receiving money for it, so I confidently ".replied: "Yes

He said: "If you are really teaching for the sake of God, then be aware that the

God of children and that of adolescents and youngsters is one and the same, and if they call you "teacher of children" and "children story-teller " you should not be ".annoyed

The statement of that old man was divine enlightenment for me. It taught me that the Lord of the rich and famous and that of the poor and needy is one and the same. I sincerely wish we all reach such a stage where we consider it equally prestigious to participate in the assembly of the famous and that of the unknown; to study alongside

popular personages and unsung individuals; to render service in prestigious centers or common centers; to teach at the simple and elementary level or at a higher level of learning; where we expect honor from God alone and not through money, fame, material assets, hats, and position!

Having no regrets .۳

Anyone who works for God and does not expect anything from others will never feel regret if his deeds do not achieve the ideal goal because working for the sake of God leads to rewards, irrespective of their worldly outcome.

If you visit a believer or a sick person for the sake of God, and not find him at home, you are not supposed to regret going because you gained your own reward for it.

If we feel regret everyday for paying respects, entertaining others, rendering services, and offering assistance, we ought to reconsider our "motive of seeking nearness to God."

Treating receptivity and heedlessness as one .۴

In the performance of duty, it should not matter to those

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sincere whether the people welcome them or treat them with how are no importance. For them, criticism and appreciation are the same. If a person is elated by the reception of the people and discouraged by their heedlessness, it shows a lack of sincerity in him.

Of course, one may justify that being elated is for the reason that the people are gathered in truth, while being discouraged is for the fact that the people are lukewarm with respect to religion and faith. But beyond this justification, one must examine what is in one's heart.

The Commander of the Faithful ('a) has said: "The pretender has three signs. If alone, he is languid and indolent. If he is with the people, he has enthusiasm (in worship and

action). If he is appreciated by them he works more, but if he is neglected, he works (less."(1)

May God relieve us from this sort of dangerous sickness and not make us like those physicians who die of the same ailment of which they are specialists! And may it not happen in spite of writing about sincerity, we depart from this world drenched in !{pretension {riya'} and polytheism {shirk

Consistency of motive and action .۵

A sincere person is devoted to divine duty and obligation, and not deterred by conditions and circumstances. He performs his duty constantly and persistently, and does not get tired of repeating it thousands of times. Physical weakness or old age .may decrease his labor, but his fervor and motive remain unchanged

Lack of wealth and position does not hinder .۶

For a sincere person, wealth

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.Muhajjah al-Baydha', vol. ۶, p. ۱۴۴ -۱

and position are not hindrances in the performance of his duty. He sacrifices his desires and needs, and if necessary, even his life in the fulfillment of his duty. If attachment to wealth, position, relatives, and friends becomes a hindrance to his :performance, sincerity will depart. The Holy Qur'an states

If your fathers and your sons, your brethren, your spouses, and your kinsfolk, the" possessions that you have, the business you fear may suffer, and the dwellings you are fond of, are dearer to you than Allah and His Apostle and to waging jihad in His (way, then wait until Allah issues His edict."(1)

The sincere person is not a captive of place, time, spouse, residence and his self. He .only strives to please God

It has been narrated that a rider and his horse arrived at a stream. The man did everything, he even whipped the animal but the horse would not step into the water. The man stepped into the water and pulled the horse's bridle but the horse still refused. A sage who was present there said: "Mount the horse and muddy the water with your stick and spade and them the horse will cross." He did so and the horse .crossed the stream without any problem

The rider asked the reason for the wise man's advice. The wise man replied: "As the horse could see its reflection in the limpid water of the stream, it was not willing to step on its face. But since the water was

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.Surah at-Tawbah (or, Bara'ah) ۹:۲۳ -۱

"!disturbed, the horse crossed the stream

Yes, those who are self-centered and inclined toward wealth, position, children and occupation for themselves cannot be sincere, because in the path of sincerity .everything must be sacrificed

Oneness of the apparent and the hidden .۷

Under certain circumstances or in the presence of certain people, a person may do certain things that are contrary to his inner and personal state. This is a type of ostentation. 'Ali ('a) said: "One who is as honest in his secret activities as in overt deeds and whose words and actions suit, is the person who has faithfully discharged the duty laid down upon him by the Lord, has honestly handed over the things entrusted to him, and has sincerely obeyed Allah only to achieve His favors and (blessings."(۱

The sincere person discharges his duty in the way of God without taking into account the satisfaction and pleasure of anyone in particular, and he is also not afraid of any :censure

(يُجاهِدُونَ فِى سَبِيلِ اللّهِ وَلاَ يَخافُونَ لَوْمَةَ لآئِمٍ)

(Wage jihad in the way of Allah, not fearing the blame of any blamer."(٢"

Without factional bigotry .٨

Sincerity leads man to strive untiringly all the time and in, at all places. Without sincerity, however, factional bigotry and partisanship take over. His attachment and prejudice with a certain group might tend to make him active and enthusiastic, however if he becomes respect to biased against, that group he may loses his zeal, .and may even retire and seclude himself, or worse, oppose and sabotage it

A sincere person is not confined and

p: ١٠٩

.Nahj al-Balaghah, Letter ٢۶ -١
.Surah al-Ma'idah ۵:۵۴ -٢

limited to a certain group and does not practice factional bigotry. If he identifies a certain group to be linked with falsehood, he will keep away from it. He keeps himself aloof from group-worship and polytheistic prejudice presented as tribalism, .(regionalism and factionalism (which are incompatible with the spirit of sincerity

:The Holy Qur'an declares

(وَ قَالَتِ ٱلْيَهُودُ لَيۡسَتِ ٱلنَّصَارىٰ عَلىٰ شيءٍ وَ قَالَتِ ٱلنَّصَارىٰ لَيۡسَتِ ٱلْيَهُود علىٰ شيءٍ)

"The Jews say, 'The Christians stand on nothing,' and the Christians say, 'The Jews (stand on nothing'."(١

Of course, if a party, group or organization is on the path of truth, it must be supported. It means that one's falsehood must not be seen as "truth" while the truth ."of others must not be reckoned as "falsehood

Pursuit of important works undone .٩

If there is sincerity and dedication in work, a person will look for necessary and undone works whose absence is felt and nobody has done them as they do not entail .fame and money, or are not regarded as important

Glass, cabinet and curtain are as important for a building, as they are for a bathroom .and toilet

In a table spread, food, meat and others are needed and so is salt. Sincere persons have no inhibition in doing undone works, whether they are small or great, and they believe that sometimes, God blesses and gives great impact to sincerely performed, .small good deeds

When 'Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn at-Tabataba'i arrived in Qum from the Islamic seminary {hawzah 'ilmiyyah} in Najaf (in Iraq), he observed that

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.Surah al-Baqarah ۲:۱۱۳ -۱

there were a lot of classes on jurisprudence and its principles {fiqh wa usul al-fiqh}, but there was no mention of any lessons in exegesis {tafsir} of the Qur'an or .philosophy

Therefore, he started teaching these two branches of knowledge. Although, out of good intention, some individuals protested, saying that doing so is incompatible with the prestige of the future religious authority {marja' at-taqlid}, he continued teaching tafsir and philosophy and considered them expedient and necessary for the Islamic .seminary, and he wrote the monumental, Al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an

Yes, divine grace depends on the sincerity of individuals and not on the title of the .position that they occupy

Desisting from error .۱۰

The fact that one persists it error shows his lack of sincerity. If a sincere person

realizes that there is a better way, he will desist from the wrong way, or entrust the .work to the better worker

There are so many who are in error for sometime, but when the error is pointed out to them, they are not willing to change for they regard doing so as a sort of defeat. While, persistence in error is an ever more serious defeat. Sincere individuals have a sublime spirit and a great capacity to accept truth, and their magnanimity deters them .from yielding to all kinds of dishonorable egoistic actions

Outcome of sincerity

Man's sincere connection with God is accompanied by the luminosity of disposition, purity of inner self and insight, which guide him in the twists and turns of life as well as impasses

.and predicaments

Imam 'Ali ('a) said: "When sincerity enters the heart, it is accompanied by glow and (perspicacity."(١

This is the same "furqan" {criterion} that the Holy Qur'an regards as a result of God-:{wariness {taqwa

(إِن تَتَّقُواْ اللّهَ يَجْعَل لَّكُمْ فُرْقَاناً)

(If you are wary of Allah, He shall appoint a criterion(٢) for you."(٣"

It also argues that if you are conscious of God, He will bestow a light on you which will :light your way

(وَيَجْعَل لَّكُمْ نُورًا تَمْشُونَ بِهِ)

(And give you a light to walk by."(٤"

Sincerity, God-wariness and keeping away from carnal desire have an outcome that

enhances the clear-sightedness of man and leads him from the darkness of polytheism, ignorance {jahl} and capricious desire to the atmosphere of light, monotheism and knowledge. He who has sincerity will attain felicity and success.(۵)

Sincerity has extraordinary value and at the same time, it is so difficult. In the supplications at dawn during the month of Ramadhan, Imam as-Sajjad ('a) prays to God to remove hypocrisy {nifaq} from the heart, and ostentation {riya'} from the act.

In the Du'a' al-'Arafah, Imam al-Husayn ('a) also beseeches God to bestow sincerity in action.

Sincerity in the context of society

Ideal and valuable sincerity must be in the context of society, among the people, and accompanied by social responsibilities and activities. Some erroneously identify sincerity with isolation and seclusion, away from people. God brings about pure and wholesome milk from food and blood.(۶) The sincere person must also keep himself pure in the midst of an impure and corrupt environment, and free

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۱- Fihrist Ghurar al-Hikam, p. ۹۳, under the word "khuls."

۲ - That is, a knowledge which will enable you to distinguish between truth and falsehood. {Qur'an Translator}

۳- Surah al-Anfal ۸:۲۹.

۴- Surah al-Hadid ۵۷:۲۸.

۵- Fihrist Ghurar al-Hikam, p. ۹۲.

۶- Surah an-Nahl ۱۶:۶۶: "And lo! In the cattle there is a lesson for you. We give you to drink of that which is in their bellies, from betwixt the refuse and the blood, pure milk palatable to the drinkers."

his actions from ostentation, and succeed. Such sincerity is valuable and important.

The sincere person {mukhlis} sets himself at the disposal of God, makes his heart the sanctuary of this love, and allows divine motives to guide all his actions and behavior,

.and in doing so, he attains honor and nobility

!Let's Engage in Prayer

point

After intention {niyyah} which is the decision to perform the act of worship for the sake of God and to establish prayer with the aim of seeking nearness to Allah, we embark on the prayer itself. Along with "presence of heart" {hudhur-e qalbi}, mental preparation and total attention to the Lord, we recite the takbir, "Allahu akbar" {God is .the greatest}. This attentiveness and presence of heart serves as the spirit of prayer

{Allahu Akbar" {God is the greatest"

point

God is superior and greater than we think and imagine, and superior than what our pens and tongues can describe. His grandeur is beyond our understanding, cognition .and comprehension

Whatever He wills is realized immediately. His command is obeyed. He created the universe with its natural phenomena and human beings from nothing. He nourishes and guides everything, and the life and existence of all living species (plants and .animals) are in His hand. To Him is the return of all things created by Him

It is He who dispenses with honor and disgrace. He is self-sufficient but everything depends on Him. He fashions man in the womb of his mother. He endows guided instincts in his nature {fitrah} as a trust. He heals the sick. He

gives strength to the weak. Everything is perishable and passes away except His .Essence

On the Day of Resurrection, the reckoning, book account, reward, and punishment are done by Him. It will be manifest on that day that power belongs to Him and all others can do nothing, and those who turned their faces to other than Him are lost

(and defeated.(1)

.Our prayer commences with the Name of that Magnificent Lord

After the intention, we recite the takbirat al-ihram,(2) which signifies the commencement of our prayer.

!Allahu akbar

.{Allahu akbar is the crux of our school's {maktab} belief {'aqidah

.{Prayer begins with Allahu akbar and ends with rahmat Allah {mercy of God

Prayer needs attention of the heart as well as eulogy and salutation of the tongue. We listen to the praises and invocations, while we worship with the movements of our bodily limbs and organs.

Prayer begins with the Name of Allah, and it is not like the idol-worshippers, taghutis and Christians who begin their activity with the name of their idols, the taghuts and kings or Jesus ('a).

Prayer is accompanied by Allahu akbar, which announces, the invalidity of all falsehoods and futile powers, and is repeated eighty five times throughout the daily obligatory and recommended prayers.

.It is also uttered as a recommended act under various labels

This slogan is repeated during prayers and the secret behind our growth in spiritual dimensions lies in the very repetitions.

!God is greater than everything

God is greater the one who is compared

۱- All the descriptions mentioned are taken from verses of the Holy Qur'an.

.That is, the first takbir uttered in prayer -٢

.with others

He is greater than human comprehension, the claims of others, the insinuations of .Satan, and the visages of the world

If Allahu akbar springs forth from the depth of our souls and on the basis of faith and belief, the world and its temptations, the splendor of power and its manifestations, .will become trivial and insignificant in our sight

.His Pleasure will become superior to everything else

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says that when you utter takbir at the beginning of prayer, everything except God must be insignificant in your sight, and if not, it shall be said: '!'You are a liar

If in the mind of the one praying there is someone greater, he will be considered a liar, just as the hypocrites {munafiqun} used to verbally bear witness to the apostleship of the Messenger of Allah (S), but they had no faith in what they were saying. God :described them as liars

(And Allah bears witness that the hypocrites are indeed liars."(١"

Because such duality of speech and belief is hypocrisy. As such, the same Imam ('a) says: "God addresses such worshippers, saying: "Are you deceiving and duping Me? By My Honor and Glory! I shall deprive you of nearness to Me, the sweetness of (remembering {dhikr} Me, and the pleasure of My litanies."(٢

:After narrating this hadith, the late Faydh Kashani says

Whenever you attain the pleasure and sweetness of litanies during prayer, be aware that your takbir is accepted and confirmed by God, the Exalted, and if it is

.Surah al-Munafiqun ۶۳:۱ -۱

.Muhajjah al-Baydha', vol. ۱, p. ۳۸۵ -۲

not, you will feel that God has expelled you from His Court, does not confirm your utterance, and regards you as a liar."(۱)

!Yes, God is the greatest

Anyone who professes such belief will, like the Great Leader of the Islamic Revolution (Imam Khomeini) (may his soul be sanctified), says even to the US as such: "It cannot do a damn thing."

:{Ali ('a) considers it as part of the attributes of the pious ones {muttaqin'

عَظُمَ الْخَالِقُ فِی أَنْفُسِهِم فَصَغُرَ مَادُوْنَهُ فِی أَعْیُنِهِم.

"The greatness of the Creator is seated in their heart, and so, everything else appears small in their eyes."(۲)

Surah al-Hamd

point

In every prayer, the recital of Surah al-Hamd (or al-Fatihah) is necessary. It is the surah {chapter} that describes God as the Creator and Nourisher of the universe, Most Beneficent and Most Merciful, Master of the Day of Judgment, followed by a declaration of worshipping only Him, and beseeching only Him for His help and guidance in treading the straight path.

:Now, we shall discuss the highlights of this surah

{Bismillahi'r-rahmani'r-rahim {In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful

.We begin with the name and help of the All-beneficent and All-merciful God

He is the Lord whose compassion encompasses all and whose kindness is universal and everlasting. Others have either no compassion, or their compassion is limited, or

their aim is not to be compassionate. But in the case of God, even His act of creating all beings is based on grace and kindness:

(إِلاَّ مَنْ رَحِمَ رَبُّکَ وَ لِذٰلِکَ خَلَقَهُم)

"Except those on whom your Lord has mercy—and that is why He

۱- Ibid.

۲- Khutbah al-Muttaqin or Hammam (Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon ۱۹۱).

created them."(۱)

Whoever loses the mercy of the Lord is himself responsible.

Divine mercy is all-encompassing, but sometimes, people close the door of mercy for themselves through their false thinking and actions.

Bismillah {In the Name of Allah} at the beginning of every action is the secret code of love for God, reliance on Him, seeking help from Him, and depending on Him.

Bismillah means holding fast and clinging to the inspiration-giving Name of God and fleeing from the insinuations of Satan.

Bismillah has been at the beginning of all heavenly scriptures,(۲) and the prophets ('a) also used to start all their work with the name of Allah.(۳) This act sets man under the protection and care of God and anyone who sincerely seeks refuge in God will be guided on the straight path:

(وَمَن يَعْتَصِم بِاللّهِ فَقَدْ هُدِىَ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيم)

"And whoever takes recourse in Allah is certainly guided to a straight path."(۴)

Bismillah is the sign of servitude to God and dependence on Him. It is like saying: "O Lord! I have not forgotten You. I begin every activity with Your Name. I take You as

".my Protecter and drive away Satan through Your assistance

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) said: "Bismillah is the crown of all surahs,"(۵) and it is the sign of security and mercy. And there is no bismillah at the beginning of Surah al-Bara'ah (or at-Tawbah) because this surah is a declaration of disgust and disavowal for the infidels and polytheists, and this act must not be accompanied by mercy.(۶)

p: ۱۱۷

۱- Surah Hud ۱۱:۱۱۹.

۲- Tafsir Safi, vol. ۱, p. ۵۱.

۳- For example, in setting off the ark, Hadhrat Nuh (Noah) ('a) said: "In the name of Allah be its course and its mooring. Lo! my Lord is Forgiving, Merciful" (Surah Hud ۱۱:۴۱). Hadhrat Sulayman (Solomon) ('a) also began his letter to the Queen of Sheba with the name of Allah: "Lo! it is from Solomon, and lo! it is: In the name of Allah the Beneficent, the Merciful" (Surah an-Naml ۲۷:۳۰).

۴- Surah Al 'Imran ۳:۱۰۱.

۵- Tafsir al-Qurtubi, vol. ۱, under the exegesis of "Bismillah."

۶- Tafsir Fakhr ar-Razi; Majma' al-Bayan, vol. ۱, under the exegesis of "Bismillah."

It is stated in the hadith that every action, be it writing a single verse of poetry, must begin with bismillah, and that every action that is devoid of His remembrance will not reach its conclusion.(۱)

"Al-hamdulillahi rabbi'l-'alamin" {All praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds}

Praise and eulogy belong exclusively to God who nourishes all creatures. For the nourishment of the physical realm, He has set the order of creation, the movement of the earth, the sun, air, plants, seas, and material blessings.

And for the nourishment of the soul, He has designated the prophets ('a), heavenly books, pleasant and unpleasant instructive events, etc.

For the guidance of humanity, He has sent down religion and laws based on the natural disposition {fitrah} of man, and founded on reason {'aql}. He has not left the

earth without a guide nor placed it at the disposal of man with all its apparent and hidden blessings, but ensured the presence of a proof {hujjah} of His Ownership and Watchfulness. If a minute change and disorder occurs in the order of creation, .everything will perish

The firm and fixed order of creation in the mountains and plants, atoms and galaxies, water and soil, the four seasons, day and night, organs of the body, diverse instincts, and the different sets of guidance is a perfect manifestation of His Lordship .{rububiyyah} for the entire universe

Our body organs and limbs have such wonderful precision, complexity and order that it is amazing. The quality of the eye, ear, heart, respiratory organs, veins, nerves, the five senses, reflects the wonderful divine

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۱- .Tafsir Safi, vol. ۱, p. ۵۲

.design

:It is lamentable that instead of giving thanks, man is most ungrateful

(و كان الانسانُ كفوراً)

"For man was ever thankless."(۱)

:Instead of seeking nearness to God, he turns away from Him

(اِذآ أنْعَمْنَا على الانسانِ اَعْرَضَ)

"When We bless man, he is disregardful and turns aside; but when an ill befalls him, he is despondent."(۲)

:And instead of loving and worshipping God, he expresses enmity and insolence

(فَاذا هُوَ خَصيمٌ مُبينٌ)

"Behold, he is an open contender!?"(3)

It is regrettable that instead of showing humility and reverence, he assumes an air of dignity:

(يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ مَاغَرَّكَ بِرَبِّكَ الْكَرِيمِ)

"O man! What has deceived you about your generous Lord?"(4)

A false feeling of self-sufficiency makes him rebel (against God):

(كَلَّا إِنَّ الْإِنسَانَ لَيَطْغَى أَن رَّآهُ اسْتَغْنَى)

"Indeed man becomes rebellious when he considers himself without need."(5)

And he thinks the divine blessings are the result of his own efforts:

(انما اوتيتُهُ على عِلم)

"I have indeed been given {all} this because of the knowledge that I have."(6)

And he does not pay heed to the sounds of awakening:

(وَ إِذَا ذُكِّرُوا لَا يَذْكُرُون)

"And {even} when admonished do not take admonition."(7)

This ungrateful man extends gratitude to all people for the least goodness done to him, but he forgets God who is the main "Bestower of Favors" {wali an-ni'mah}. It is a pity that man loses the way, puts out the light of thought {fikr} and natural disposition {fitrah}, shuts his eyes, attaches his heart to so-and-so,

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1- Surah al-Isra' 17:67.

2- Surah al-Isra' 17:83.

3- Surah Ya-Sin 36:77.

.Surah al-Infitar ۸۲:۶ -۴
.Surah al-‘Alaq ۹۶:۶-۷ -۵
.Surah al-Qasas ۲۸:۷۸ -۶
.Surah as-Saffat ۳۷:۱۳ -۷

.and relies on human and satanic powers instead of trusting God

The sentence, “Al-hamdulillahi rabbi’l-‘alamin” extinguishes these complacencies, .{reminds us of the blessings of the Divine Lordship {rububiyyat-e ilahi

God is the Lord of the worlds. He is the Lord of the entire universe, all creatures, and all things: “He is the Lord of all things,”(۱) and not in the sense of the pre-Islamic period of ignorance {yawm al-jahiliyyah} where there was a lord and cherisher for every kind of thing {rabb an-Naw‘}. God is the Master, Manager and Administrator of .all. He creates, regulates, as well as trains

{Ar-rahmani’r-rahim” {the All-beneficent, the All-merciful“

The extent of His universal Beneficence surrounds everything. His mercy precedes .His wrath

He has paved the way of repentance {tawbah} for the sinners, promising that He accepts repentance even on the verge of death of the repentant, and He loves the :penitent ones

(إِنَّ الله يُحِبُّ ٱلتَّوَّابين)

(Indeed Allah loves the pertinent.”(۲“

:And He has made it incumbent upon Himself to be merciful and oft-forgiving

(كَتَبَ رَبُّكُمْ على نفسِهِ الرَّحمه)

(Your Lord has made mercy incumbent upon Himself.”(۳“

:He has also made everybody hopeful and called upon them toward His mercy

(لَا تقنَطُوا مِنْ رَحْمَهِ اللهِ إِنَّ اللهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنوبَ جَمِيعًا)

(Do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed Allah will forgive all sins."(۴"

Among the manifestations of the mercy of the Lord is that He transforms into good :even the evil deeds

(يُبَدِّلُ اللهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِم حَسَنَاتٍ)

(Allah will replace their misdeeds with good deeds."(۵"

Even trials, afflictions and difficulties are signs of

.Surah al-An'am ۶:۱۶۴ -۱

.Surah al-Baqarah ۲:۲۲۲ -۲

.Surah al-An'am ۶:۵۴ -۳

.Surah az-Zumar ۳۹:۵۳ -۴

.Surah al-Furqan ۲۵:۷۰ -۵

His mercy that arouse man from the slumber of negligence and urge him to search. Enduring the difficulties is pleasurable for the saints of God who thank Him for those .pains

{Maliki yawmi'd-din" {Master of the Day of Retribution"

He is the Master of the Day of Retribution. This is another Attribute of God which is .exclusively His

:Man mostly gives thanks in three cases

;Attention to past favors .۱

Attention to present love; and .۲

.Attention to future grace .۳

Keeping this in view, all praise must be solely for God because He has safeguarded our past; blessed our present with His mercy and grace; and in the future on the Day of Resurrection, all our accounts will be with Him, so we pray for His favor and compassion.

He is the master—the Real Master!

Although human beings in the world are captives in the webs of open and hidden polytheisms, on the Day of Judgment all will realize that the universe and everything in it belongs to Him, and that He is the Master of the universe, Absolute Sovereign and Real Ruler:

"And all command that day will belong to Allah."(١)

On the Day of Resurrection, the people will be asked:

"To whom does the sovereignty belong today?"(٢)

They will answer, thus:

"To Allah, the One, the All-paramount."(٣)

The phrase, "Maliki yawmi'd-din" reminds man of the reckoning on the Day of Judgment so that while he still has time he needs to improve himself.(۴)

Every time Imam as-Sajjad ('a) would reach this phase in prayer, he would repeat it to such an extent that it seemed

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١- Surah al-Infitar ٨٢:١٩.

٢- Surah al-Ghafir (or al-Mu'min) ۴٠:١۶.

٣- Surah Ibrahim ١۴:۴٨; Surah al-Ghafir (or al-Mu'min) ۴٠:١۶.

۴- The Messenger of Allah (S) said to Abu Dharr Ghaffari: "Reckon yourself before you will be reckoned." Makarim al-Akhlaq.

his soul would separate from his body.(١)

Din" (in "Maliki yawmi'd-din") means retribution {jaza'}. God is the Master of the Day" of Retribution, and Reward. In this surah, both His mercy and His wrath and justice are pointed out so as to make clear the code of proper living, which is between fear of .His Wrath and hope of His Mercy

Iyyaka na'budu wa iyyaka nasta'in" {You {alone} do we worship and to You {alone} do we turn" {for help

Up to that point, the one praying verbally expressed his beliefs regarding the genesis and final destination as well as the Attributes of God. So, the outcome of these beliefs .must be sincere servitude and asking succor from God

Even if the one praying is alone, he recites the sentence in the plural form so as to relate himself to the other worshippers. Perhaps, his defective worship would be accepted and considered along with the acts of worship of the perfect, sincere and .upright ones

The collective description gives the lesson that the "I's" must become "we". The edifice of worship, prayer in particular, is founded on congregation, while .individualism, isolation and segregation are worthless

In the same ayah, worship of Allah alone has been coupled with seeking help from Him alone, so that side by side with servitude, we also beg for immunity from deviation of thought, arrogance and self-admiration, ostentation and sluggishness. One must seek assistance from Him, because He and only He can grant us with faith .and recognition of Truth

Waking up in the morning, performing ablution with water, moving and standing, all emanate from Him. The

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.Nur ath-Thaqalayn, vol. ۱, p. ۱۶, hadith ۷۸ -۱

acceptance of prayer and our immunity from arrogance and ostentation are in His

.hand

.We owe even our interest in worship to His grace

Worship is solely for God. Neither worship of the West nor worship of the East; neither servitude to force or position; neither submission to carnal desire, nor seduction by .woman; neither enamored by offspring nor obsessed with wealth

This sentence in prayer condemns serving any kind of interest more than God. It negates every sort of assistance from false powers. It teaches the worshipper the lesson of “honor under the auspices of servitude to God”, not become a slave and servant of other than God, not to be afraid of the threats and warnings of others, and .not under any circumstances abandon the way of God

{Ihdina’s–sirat al–mustaqim” {Guide us on the straight path“

point

Our first request to God after praising and eulogizing Him, sincerely expressing our servitude to Him, and begging Him for help, is the request for guidance along the right path. In the theoretical and practical issues of life, beliefs, behavior, and attitudes, recognizing the correct path is so important, yet so difficult. As such, we implore God .{to guide us to the “straight path” {sirat al-mustaqim

{Sirat al–mustaqim” {The straight path“

When the right path is talked about, non-straight paths will also be touched. Once we identify these “byways” we will also recognize better “the way”. Below is a list of non- :straight paths

The path of one’s passions that appear at the time of anger, sensual desire and .١ ;instinctive outbursts

;The path of others’ passions .٢

The path .۳

;of disbelief, extremism and bigotry

;The path of satanic insinuations and their manifestations .۴

;The path of the taghuts that draw people through threat and temptation .۵

The path of worldliness in which wealth and position make man strive for the .۶ ;pleasure of so-and-so

;The paths lacking proof and logic, and based on false fads and tendencies .۷

;The path chosen by man for being unmindful, inexperienced and heedless .۸

The path that drew those who tread it toward perdition (the path of those who .۹ ;(earned God's wrath and those who go astray

.The path of personal tastes and opinions, as well as improper habits .۱۰

?Now, let us find the straight path

:The path of God

(إِنَّ رَبِّی عَلیٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِیمٍ)

(Indeed my Lord is on a straight path."(۱"

:(The path of the prophets ('a

(إِنَّکَ عَلیٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِیمٍ)

(Indeed you are on a straight path."(۲"

:The path of servitude and worship

(وَ أَن اُعْبُدُونی هذا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِیمٌ)

"Worship Me. This is a straight path."(3)

The path of the infallible Imams: Imam as-Sadiq ('a) said: "Verily, we are the 'straight path'."(4)

The path of clinging and holding fast to God and His law:

(وَمَن يَعْتَصِم بِاللّهِ فَقَدْ هُدِىَ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ)

"And whoever takes recourse in Allah is certainly guided to a straight path."(5)

Some Notes

1. The straight path is different for different individuals, in different periods and under different circumstances. At one time, it assumes the form of silence, while voicing out at another. It is sometimes spending wealth, while sacrificing life at

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1- Surah Hud 11:56.
2- Surah az-Zukhruf 43:43.
3- Surah Ya Sin 36:62.
4- Nur ath-Thaqalayn, vol. 1, p. 17.
5- Surah Al 'Imran 3:101.

another. It is studying for one person, while working for another, etc. (These statements must not be taken as an excuse to escape from social and religious responsibilities for personal comfort.)

2. Those that are on the straight path and possess congenial conditions and facilities must not criticize and find fault with others (who are also busy in other activities in the way of God) because the ways to attain the pleasure of God are diverse, and every individual's actions vary in degree from those of another. In many cases, all are treading the straight path under a single banner through diverse methods.

3. Persistence of movement along the straight path is imperative, for humans are

inclined to err and deviate. In a hadith from 'Ali ('a) concerning the meaning of the verse, he stated that "set The future of our life, too, on the right path."(1)

4. The person who is in the highest degree of perfection (including even the degree of infallibility {'ismah}) must continue praying to God for the straight path, because this path has various angles, and like light, knowledge, and movement, it is evolutionary and creative. Regarding further guidance of the guided ones, the Holy Qur'an states:

(وَ يَزِيدُ اللهُ الَّذِينَ اهْتَدُوْا هُدىً)

"Allah enhances in guidance those who are {rightly} guided."(2)

And in the initial part of Makarim al-Akhlaq Supplication, Imam as-Sajjad ('a) beseeches God to make his faith, certainty, desires, and goals attain the perfect degree of sublimity.

5. To identify the straight path is difficult and

1- Tafsir Nemuneh, as quoted in Tafsir Safi.
2- Surah Maryam 19:76.

to stay on it is even more difficult, like passing through a narrow and slippery pass, narrower than a string of hair and sharper than a sword. Most of the people either fail to recognize it or go astray after treading it. One will be misguided in belief while another in practice. One will become a proponent of predestination {jabr} while another that of Divine Resignation {tafwidh}.(1)

One will elevate the infallible leaders to the level of divinity and commit extremism in belief,(2) while another one regards them as common people, and even as insane, or soothsayers. Yet another considers paying homage {ziyarah} to the Imams and martyrs as an act of polytheism.(3)

There is one who worships trees and walls, while another leads a monastic life. One

wastes his wealth and faces poverty, while another suffers from laziness. One does not even mention the name of his wife out of excessive (and misplaced) possessiveness, while another sends his spouse onto the streets without observing the Islamic dress code {hijab}.

Islam invites the people to the right and straight path, which is the middle way, the path of equilibrium and moderation in all affairs—including devotional affairs. In the hadith, there is a section called "Al-Iqtisad fi'l-'Ibadat" {Moderation in the Acts of Worship}.

"Sirat al-mustaqim" in the traditions

Concerning this part of the ayah, Imam al-'Askari ('a) says: "With this phrase, the worshipper prays for obedience and servitude in the future just as in the past, and the straight path is a way which is higher than

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۱- Tafwidh: the belief that after creating all beings, God has left them to administer their own affairs and follow their own wills. In other words, it is the upholding of freewill {ikhtiyar} vis-à-vis predestination. {Trans.}

۲- For example, there are those who regard Hadhrat 'Isa ('a) and Hadhrat 'Ali ('a) as divine.

۳- For example, the Wahhabis.

shortsightedness and lower than extravagant opinions."(۱)

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says: "The straight path is that which drives man to love God and His religion, discourages partisanship, and hinders following one's desires and personal views about religion."(۲)

In the book, Bihar al-Anwar, there are ۵۶ hadiths about it—that the 'straight path' means the pure Imams, the infallible saints of God and their true followers.

It is because they are the embodiment of the path of truth, and their wrath and

benevolence, war and peace, worship and deed, thinking and action are based on the command of God and in the straight way. Following them in this world is a difficult task and full of responsibility, like the sirat {path} in the hereafter which is above hell, narrower than a strand of hair and sharper than a sword.(۳)

Anyone who has been on the straight path in this world will easily and quickly cross that sirat. And those who engage in immoderation and excess will face problems in crossing the sirat.

Imam 'Ali ('a) has described those who have deviated from the straight path thus:

If he sees even a tiny gleam of success, then greed forces him to humiliate himself. If he gives way to avarice, then inordinate desires ruin him. If he is disappointed, then despondency almost kills him. If he is excited, then he loses temper and gets angry. If he is pleased, then he gives up precaution...

If he acquires wealth, then he becomes haughty and arrogant. If he is plunged

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۱- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۲۴, p. ۹.

۲- Ibid.

۳- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸, p. ۶۵.

in distress, then his agitation, impatience and nervousness disgrace him. If he is overtaken by poverty, then he finds himself in a very sad plight. Hunger makes him weak, and over-feeding harms him equally.(۱)

And such excess and licentiousness stem from ignorance {jahl} about which the Commander of the Faithful ('a) has said:

لاَ تَرى الجَاهِلُ إِلاَّ مُفْرِطًا أَوْ مُفَرِّطًا.

"An ignorant person will always overdo a thing or neglect it totally (That is, he will be at one extreme or the other)."(۲)

Of course, to identify immoderation and profligacy is difficult, as every person regards his own conduct as reasonable and just accusing others of extremism and shortcomings. Being ignorant, he tends to commit immoderation in this act of attributing things to others. The divine saints and those who are trained in the school {maktab} of the prophets ('a), however, still act according to the truth even in their judgments.

Examples of immoderation and profligacy

Numerous cases of deviation from the straight path have been stated in hadiths. We shall cite below some of these cases of immoderation and profligacy:

۱. Regarding appreciation of others, Hadhrat 'Ali ('a) says: "To praise more than entitlement is sycophancy; to do less is either because of inability to express or of envy."(۳)

۲. With respect to extremism in reproach, the Imam ('a) says: "Immoderation and excess in reproaching someone kindles the fire of obstinacy."(۴)

۳. Concerning the criterion of spending, the Holy Qur'an says:

(وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَنفَقُوا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوا وَكَانَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ قَوَامًا)

"Those who, when

۱- Nahj al-Balaghah, Saying ۱۰۸.

۲- Nahj al-Balaghah, Saying ۷۰.

۳- Nahj al-Balaghah (Subhi Salih), Saying ۳۴۷.

۴- Mizan al-Hikmah, vol. ۸, p. ۵۴۶.

spending, are neither wasteful nor tightfisted, and moderation lies between these {extremes}."(۱)

{Sirat alladhina an'amta 'alayhim {The path of those whom You have blessed

The Glorious Qur'an clearly describes the people who have been blessed by God, :saying

(وَ مَنْ يُطِعِ اللهَ و الرَّسُولَ فَأُولئِکَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللهُ عَلَيهِم مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَ الصِّدِّيقِينَ وَ الشُّهَداءِ وَ الصَّالِحِينَ وَ حَسُنَ أُولئِکَ رَفِيقًا)

Whoever obeys Allah and the Apostle—they are with those whom Allah has blessed," including the prophets and the truthful, the martyrs and the righteous. The best of company are they!"(۲)

We recite this verse many times day and night as it is our request to God to be included in the company of the four categories.

:In Tafsir-e Nemuneh, we read the following

The four categories (the prophets, the truthful {siddiqin}, martyrs, and the righteous {salihin}) are perhaps necessary to build a sound, advanced and religious human society, and the prophets and true leaders must enter the scene of action. Next to them are the truthful and upright propagators whose words and actions promote the mission of the prophets in all places.

Following this period of intellectual reformation (the Islamic Revolution in Iran), the corrupt elements and those who obstruct the path of truth will naturally express their opposition, and in confronting them there must be a collective uprising. As a result, some will be martyred and through their pure blood, the tree of monotheism will be irrigated.

In the fourth stage, the product of these efforts and struggles is the sprouting of the righteous ones, as well as a pure and meritorious society full

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۱- Surah al-Furqan ۲۵:۶۷.

۲- Surah an-Nisa' ۴:۶۹.

of spirituality!(۱)

What is interesting is that in Bihar al-Anwar, the same infallible Imams ('a) have been presented in numerous traditions as the perfect embodiments of the martyrs, the truthful and the righteous.(۲)

Such a request in prayer demands a fellowship of these four groups in thought and action. Anyone who is endowed with the grace and favor of God will neither accept oppression nor support the oppressors. In this connection, Hadhrat Musa ('a) said:

(رَبِّ بِمَا أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ فَلَنْ أَكُونَ ظَهِيرًا لِلْمُجْرِمِينَ)

"My Lord! As You have blessed me, I will never be a supporter of the guilty."(۳)

At this point, the intellectual and practical orientation of the worshipper will be clear when he asks God to let him tread the path of those exalted personages.

Ghayri'l-maghdhubi 'alayhim wa ladh-dhallin" {Such as have not incurred Your wrath, nor are astray}

It is not the path of the accursed Pharaohs and powerful ones who were drowned and perished on account of their infidelity and stubbornness.(۴)

It is neither the path of the Qaruns and stony-hearted capitalists who incurred the divine wrath and were swallowed by the earth on account of their obstinacy in dealing with the men of God.(۵)

Neither is it the way of the worldly scholars and 'ulama' who did nothing but create dissension and earned the anger of God.(۶)

In order to identify those who incurred the divine wrath, one must study the history and fate of individuals and communities that earned the anger of God and were chastised and ruined, such as the Jewish community, the people of Lut (Lot), the

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۱- Tafsir Nemuneh, vol. ۱, p. ۵۳.

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۲۴, from p. ۳۰ onward -۲

.Surah al-Qasas ۲۸:۱۷ -۳

Surah al-Qasas ۲۸:۴۰: "So We seized him and his hosts, and threw them into the sea. -۴ "!So observe how the fate of the wrongdoers was

".Surah al-Qasas ۲۸:۸۱: "So We caused the earth to swallow him and his house -۵

Surah as-Saff ۶۱:۳: "It is greatly outrageous to Allah that you should say what you -۶ ".do not do

(followers of the taghuts, hypocrites, murderers, etc.(۱

While declaring disavowal of such groups, the worshipper asks God not to let him .{tread their path, nor follow the way of the misguided ones {adh-dhallin

Those who are misguided in thought and action, and fanatically entangled in the incorrect polytheistic beliefs of their forebears, they are a manifestation of those who .{have gone astray {dhallin

Surah al-Hamd ends here—the surah that begins with hamd {praise} and ends with .du'a' {supplication}; the surah which heals and is the prologue to the Holy Book

Surah at-Tawhid

point

(قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ)

Say, 'He is Allah, the One'. Allah is the All-embracing. He neither begat nor was" (begotten. Nor has He any equal."(۲

Although after Surah al-Hamd, any other surah may be recited in prayer, Surah at-Tawhid is more meritorious. It is also recommended to the leader of the congregational prayer to take into account the situation of others by selecting a short .surah

The surah also begins with the Name of Allah. With the exception of Surah at-Tawbah, Bismillah {In the Name of Allah} is the beginning of all surahs and is

.considered one of the verses of each surah

As Surah at-Tawbah contains criticism and disavowal of the infidels and polytheists, it does not have bismillah because disavowal and disgust are incompatible with the "All-beneficent" {ar-rahman} and "All-merciful" {ar-rahim} Attributes of Allah.

Starting with the Name of Allah is meant to bestow divine

۱- See Surah an-Nisa' ۴:۹۳; Surah Hud ۱۱:۵۹-۶۰; Surah al-Hijr ۱۵:۷۴.
۲- Surah al-Ikhlas (or at-Tawhid) ۱۱۲:۱-۴.

color, divine orientation and divine motive to the works and programs in hand, and is an educative point in the culture of Islam. One must pay attention to God at both the beginning and end of any action, including the slaughtering of animals!

Any act without bismillah is void, and sometimes, because of heedlessness to God, terrible consequences are faced. It happened to someone that at the moment of sitting down, the legs of his chair collapsed and his head broke as he stumbled upon the ground. Hadhrat 'Ali ('a) said: "The reason behind this unpleasant happening is that you did not utter bismillah."(۱)

Surah at-Tawhid is singular in presenting the oneness of Allah. God is One and Unequal in every aspect because His Being and Attributes are unlimited, and the Unlimited Being cannot be but only one. For example, if a house wants to be unlimited and infinite in terms of area, no land and space will remain for other houses, and this house will not be more than one.

God is One and He is such in everything:

He is One in creation:

"Say, 'Allah is the creator of all things, and He is the One, the All-paramount'."(۲)

He is One in giving nourishment:

"And He is the Lord of all things."(3)

He is One in ownership:

"To Allah belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth."(4)

He is One in Sovereignty:

"The decision is for Allah only."(5)

He is One in providing assistance:

"Is He who answers the call of the distressed {person} when

1- Payam-e Qur'an (Tafsir-e Mawdhu'i), vol. 1.
2- Surah ar-Ra'd 13:16.
3- Surah al-An'am 6:164.
4- Surah Al 'Imran 3:189.
5- Surah al-An'am 6:57.

he invokes Him?"(1)

And He is peerless in all Attributes.

He is samad {All-embracing}.

He is the Self-sufficient Being of whom all are in need and to whom all pay attention. He is samad; that is, He is free from food, sleep, change, transformation, partner, negligence, tiredness, begetting and being begotten, etc.(2)

Imam 'Ali ('a) said: "Samad means that He is not a body, a similitude, nor form; and neither has He any semblance, location, time, boundary, limitation, and form. He is neither empty nor full."(3)

"He neither begat nor was begotten} "Lam yalid wa lam yulad}

He has neither offspring not parent. He is not taken from anything nor can something be taken from His Essence. He is not a fruit that can be separated from the tree, or a .tear that flows from the eye, or a pebble that comes from a rock

This statement negates the doctrines of people such as the Christians and the Jews who used to recognize ‘Isa and ‘Uzayr (Ezra), respectively, as son of God, or the idol-.worshippers who used to assume the angels to be daughters of God

{Wa lam yakun lahu kufuwan ahad” {Nor has He any equal“

He has no equal. He has no resemblance in Essence {dhat}, Attributes {sifat} and :{Actions {af‘al

(Nothing is like Him.”(۴“

To Be Calm While Reciting

Surah al-Hamd and another surah must be recited while the body is at rest. The recital must be done correctly and the pronunciation of the words which are in the Islamic international language (Arabic) must be flawless. Of course, learning the correct pronunciation is not as difficult as presumed. It only needs a bit of effort and

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۱- Surah an-Naml ۲۷:۶۲.

۲- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۳, p. ۲۲۳.

۳- Ibid.

۴- Surah ash-Shura ۴۲:۱۱.

.dedication

Arabic is the language of Islam and the Qur’an. Just as every pilot anywhere in the world must speak in English while communicating with the airport’s control tower, in prayer, which is a psychic flight and spiritual ascension of the believer, the communication with the Creator must be made in the language used by Allah to .communicate with us

At the moment of prayer, presence of heart and mind is essential. It is good for one while standing to look at the spot of prostration on the prayer mat and to perform the prayer with humility. The Holy Qur'an reckons as successful the believers who are humble in their prayers;(۱) that is, they are heedful and conscious of God, His grandeur and His magnificence, while in that particular spiritual and physical state.

The Messenger of Allah (S) saw a person who was playing with his beard while praying. He said: "If he is truly humble and attentive to his prayer, he will not perform such a prayer."(۲)

Of course, with respect to the correctness of prayer, humility and presence of the heart is just one aspect. Keeping the trust in relation to the rights of others is another.

Imam 'Ali ('a) said to Kumayl:(۳) "Be watchful of the location where you are praying and what clothes you are wearing. If your clothes and place for prayer are earned from unlawful income, your prayer will not be accepted."(۴)

{Ruku' {Bowing

Ruku' means that after finishing the recital of the surah after Surah al-Hamd, we bow

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۱- Surah al-Mu'minun ۲۳:۱-۲: "Successful indeed are the believers who are humble in their prayers."

۲- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۴, p. ۲۲۸ as quoted from Mizan al-Hikmah.

۳- Kumayl ibn Ziyad was born in Yemen. He belonged to a famous tribe of Nakha', which later settled in Kufah, Iraq. Kumayl was a staunch supporter of Islam and a loyal companion of Imam 'Ali ('a). He received his training from Imam 'Ali, who filled his heart with the love of Islam. He was an honest and pious Muslim and more than that he was a mystic. During the Caliphate of Imam 'Ali he was appointed Treasurer of the Exchequer {Bayt al-Mal} and for some time the Governor of Hyt. Kumayl, the sincere soldier of Islam, also participated in the battles which Imam 'Ali fought against Mu'awiyah, and those who had deviated from Islam. The mystic position of Kumayl

was so elevated that Imam 'Ali personally taught him the Supplication of Khidr, which was later known as the Supplication of Kumayl. At last Kumayl ibn Ziyad was killed by the despotic Umayyad Governor Hajjaj ibn Yusuf for his being an affectionate friend {.of the family of the Holy Prophet (S). {Trans

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ٨١, p. ٢٣٠ -۴

down to a certain extent with the intention of glorifying God and being obedient to His command and majesty, while our hands are placed on the knees, with our back evenly extended horizontally, and our neck equally stretched as if the worshipper is (willing to be beheaded in the way of Allah.(١

In every rak'ah, one ruku' is required with the exception of salat al-mayyit {ritual prayer for the dead} which has no ruku' and salat al-ayat {prayer for natural .phenomena or signs} whose every rak'ah has five ruku's

Ruku' is one of the pillars of prayer, and excess or decrease in its number, done consciously or unconsciously, renders the prayer invalid, being one of the most .significant expressions of servitude

Ruku' is a courtesy while sujud {prostration} is the proximity, and he who performs courtesy correctly is the one who can attain proximity to God. This is the meaning of (the statement of Imam as-Sadiq ('a) when he said: (٢

وَ فی الرُّکُوعِ أَدَبٌ وَ فی السُّجُودِ قُرْبٌ وَ مَنْ لاَیحْسِنُ الأَدَبَ لاَیصْلَحُ لِلْقُرْبِ.

There are examples of ruku' and sujud of the spiritual leaders recorded in the .traditions that will put to shame one's ruku' and sujud

Ruku' of the saints of God

The Commander of the Faithful ('a) had such a long ruku' that his forelegs would (sweat and the soles of his blessed feet would moisten.(٣

Someone came into the house of Imam as-Sadiq ('a). He saw that while in the state of ruku', the Imam was busy performing tasbih (glorifying Allah such as saying,

"subhanallah" {glory

.Muhajjah al-Baydha', vol. ۱, p. ۳۹۰ -۱

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۲, p. ۱۰۸ -۲

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۲, p. ۱۱۰ -۳

(be to Allah}), repeating the tasbih ۶۰ times.(۱)

It is recorded in another hadith that Imam as-Sadiq ('a) used to recite the invocation {dhikr} in ruku' (subhana rabbiya'l-'azim wa bihamdih) and sujud (subhana rabbiya'l-a'la wa bihamdih) ۳۰ times.(۲)

Faydh Kashani says: "The repetition of tasbih more than ۳۰ times was during congregational prayers. Since the Imam had to take into account the condition of the weak among the worshippers, it shows that those who were joining him in the congregation consented to this prolongation."

In the ruku' we say, subhana rabbiya'l-'azim wa bihamdih "Glory be to my Lord, the Great, and praise belongs to Him." When the verse, "So celebrate the Name of your Lord, the All-supreme,"(۳) was revealed, the Prophet (S) thus ordered:

(اِجعَلوها فی رکُوعِکم)

"recite it in your ruku"(۴)

In The Company of Angels

The angels of God are always in the state of worship. Some are always in ruku' while others are always in sujud and tasbih. In this regard, 'Ali ('a) said as recorded in Nahj al-Balaghah:

مِنْهُمْ سُجُود لاَیَرْکَعُونَ وَ رُکُوعٌ لاَ یَنْتَصِبُونَ وَ صَافُّونَ لاَ یَتَزَایَلُونَ وَ مُسَبِّحُونَ لاَ یَسْئمُونَ.

"Some of them are in prostration and do not kneel up. Others in kneeling position do

not stand up. Some of them are in array and do not leave their position. Others are extolling Allah and do not get tired!"(5)

The worshippers who are engaged in ruku' are in the company of angels, nay, all atoms of the world that are busy in glorifying God, the Glorious.(6) Which honor is more sublime than

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1- Al-Wafi, vol. 2, p. 107.

2- Ibid.

3- Surah al-Waqi'ah 56:74.

4- Al-Mizan, vol. 19, p. 160.

5- Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon 1.

6- Surah al-Isra' or Bani Isra'il 17:44: ""The seven heavens and the earth and all that is therein praise Him, and there is not a thing but hymneth his praise; but ye understand not their praise."

this?! And which form of negligence is more grievous than that of those who are alien to prayer, ruku' and sujud?!

Sujud {prostration}

Sujud {prostration} symbolizes the peak of humility and submission to God, and is the highest degree of worship.

By doing sujud, man unites himself with the universe: "To Allah prostrates whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth,"(1)

Sujud is the best state for man to approach God.

Sujud is the code of the four stages of human life. 'Ali ('a) says: "The first sujud means that I was mud clay in the beginning, and as I raise my head from sujud, it means that I came to the world from the soil.

The second sujud means that I will again return to the soil, and as I raise my head from sujud, it means that on the Day of Resurrection I will rise up from the grave and :be summoned."(٢) This is the subject of this Qur'anic verse

From it did We create you, into it shall We return you, and from it shall We bring you" (forth another time."(٣

Since sujud is a symbol of servitude {'ubudiyyah}, it is forbidden to prostrate on items that are meant to be eaten and worn as garments. In the state of proximity to God, it is not correct to prostrate on something which one is dependent on (while not in the (state of prayer)!(٤

It is not permissible to prostrate before other than God.(٥) If ever the brothers of (Yusuf (Joseph

p: ١٣٧

.Surah an-Nahl ١۶:۴٩ -١

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ٨٢, p. ١٣٩ -٢

.Surah Ta Ha ٢٠:۵۵ -٣

.Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ٣, p. ۵٩١ -۴

Surah al-Jinn ٧٢:١٨: "The places of worship belong to Allah, so do not invoke anyone -۵ ".along with Allah

a) prostrated before him, it was in reality a form of worship to God and gratitude to') (Him who had brought Yusuf from the bottom of the well to such honor and glory.(١

Sujud of all created beings to God

According to the Holy Qur'an and the divine worldview, all created beings have consciousness {shu'ur} and are engaged in praising and glorifying God, the Exalted, as well as prostrating before Him. There are many verses in the Glorious Qur'an in :this regard, an example of which is the following verse

Have you not regarded that to Allah prostrates whoever is in the heavens and"

whoever is on the earth, and the sun, the moon, and the stars, the mountains, the trees, and the animals and many of mankind? And for many the punishment has (become due."(۲)

In his poetry, Mawlawi(۳) has also pointed out the consciousness and faculty of :speech of all beings in the universe, saying

نطق آب و نطق خاک و نطق گِلهست محسوس حواس اهل دل

جمله ذرّات، در عالم نهانبا تو می گویند روزان و شبان

ما سمیعیم و بصیر و باهُشیمبا شما نامحرمان ما خامُشیم

از جمادی سوی جانِ جان شویدغلغله اجزای عالم بشنوید

فاش تسبیح جمادات آیدتوسوسه تأویلها بزدایدت

.The voice of water, soil and mud can be heard by the gnostics

:All particles of the world say secretly to you during the day and night

".We are hearing, discerning and vigilant. We are silent with you, the strangers"

.This worldview is also highlighted in some ways in the verses of the Qur'an

God taught the logic and language of birds to certain

p: ۱۳۸

Surah Yusuf ۱۲:۱۰۰: "And he seated his parents high upon the throne, and they fell -۱ down prostrate before him. He said, 'Father! This is the fulfillment of my dream of long ".ago, which my Lord has made come true

.Surah al-Hajj ۲۲:۱۸ -۲

Mawlawi Jalal ad-Din ar-Rumi (۱۲۰۷-۱۲۷۳) was the greatest mystic poet in the - ۳ Persian language and founder of the Mawlawiyyah order of dervishes ("The Whirling Dervishes"). He is famous for his lyrics and for his didactic epic, Mathnawi-ye Ma'nawi

{.{Spiritual Couplets}. {Trans

(prophets.(1

(Hadhrat Sulayman ('a) could understand the conversation of the ants.(2

(All the creatures glorify {tasbih} God but you cannot understand their tasbihs.(3

After discussing this issue in detail, 'Allamah Tabataba'i says: "The fact is that the tasbih of all creatures is a reality (and not metaphorical) and with speech and voice ((and not instinctively)."(4

.Of course, it is not necessary for all expressions and voices to be identical

It is true that one meaning of the tasbih of creatures is that their existence bears .witness to the Perfect Essence of God, the Exalted

Yet, the verses of the Qur'an and Prophetic traditions refer to something higher than this. It is stated in a hadith: "Do not beat the face of an animal as it is doing tasbih to God."(5) And it is also stated in another hadith: "Wash your clothes because dirty (clothes do not perform tasbih to God."(6

The Glorious Qur'an mentions the report given by the hoopoe {hudhud} to Sulayman (('a).(7

In any case, the sujud and tasbih of the worshipper are in symphony with the world of .beings that are all humble and obeisant to the command and majesty of God

Sujud of the saints of God

Being acquainted with the sujud of the divine saints inspires us with humility and :submission in worship. We shall deal below with some instances of their sujud

Imam as-Sajjad ('a) used to perform his prostrations with such concentration and repetition of the Names of Allah that whenever he would rise up, his blessed body (would be full of perspiration.(8

{After the dawn {subh

Surah an-Naml ۲۷:۱۶: “Solomon inherited from David, and he said, ‘O people! We - ۱ have been taught the speech of the birds, and we have been given out of everything. ”.Indeed this is a manifest advantage

Surah an-Naml ۲۷:۱۸-۱۹: “An ant said, ‘O ants! Enter your dwellings, lest Solomon - ۲ and his hosts should trample on you while they are unaware.’ Whereat he smiled, ”.amused at its words

Surah al-Isra’ ۱۷:۴۴: “The seven heavens glorify Him, and the earth {too}, and - ۳ whoever is in them. There is not a thing but celebrates His praise, but you do not ”.understand their glorification

.Al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur’an, vol. ۱۳, p. ۱۱۷ -۴

.Wasa’il ash-Shi‘ah, vol. ۸, p. ۳۵۳ -۵

.Tafsir Nemuneh, vol. ۱۲, p. ۱۴۰ -۶

.Surah al-Naml ۲۷:۲۲-۲۶ -۷

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۲, p. ۱۳۷ -۸

prayer, Imam al-Kazim (‘a) would place his forehead on the ground and he would remain in that state of prostration for hours until the sun was already high in the (sky.(۱

The reason behind Hadhrat Ibrahim’s (‘a) attainment of the station of “Khalil Allah” ({Friend of Allah} was his long prostrations.(۲

Salman al-Farsi used to say: “If there were no sujud, I would have wished for death ((that is, it is only sujud that I like in the life of this world).”(۳

After every supererogatory prayer, Hadhrat Musa (‘a) used to place his right and left (cheeks on the ground.(۴

A certain person said: “I saw Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) while in the state of prostration (repeating the invocation “subhan Allah” {glory be to Allah} ۵۰۰ times.”(۵

The reason why the fourth Imam ('a) earned the title of "As-Sajjad" {he who is fond of prostration} is that the mark of prostration could be seen in mawadhi' as-sajdah—all the seven parts of his body that are engaged in prostration (forehead, both hands, both knees, and toes of both feet).(۶)

The Glorious Qur'an describes the companions of the Messenger of Allah (S) that

"They} are hard against the faithless and merciful among themselves. You see them} bowing and prostrating {in worship}, seeking Allah's grace and {His} pleasure. Their mark is {visible} on their faces, from the effect of prostration." (۷)

Effects of sujud

Prostration closes man to God, washes away sins, brings satan to his knees and causes man to enter the paradise.

Someone came to the Prophet (S) and said: "I

۱- Qassar al-Jamal, under the word "sajdah" {prostration}.

۲- Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, vol. ۱, p. ۳۲۹.

۳- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۶, p. ۱۳۰.

۴- Qassar al-Jamal, under the word "sajdah" {prostration}.

۵- Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۴, p. ۹۷۷.

۶- Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۴, p. ۹۷۷.

۷- Surah al-Fath ۴۸:۲۹.

have many sins and only little good deeds." The Prophet advised him: "Increase your prostrations, because just as the wind blows away the leaves of a tree, prostrating before God washes away sins."(۱)

Some people came to the Prophet (S) and asked him to guarantee their admission to paradise. The Prophet (S) said: "I will do so provided that you help me in this task (of ensuring your admission to paradise) through your long prostrations to God."(۲)

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) said: "Prolong your prostrations because the most troublesome for Satan is man's prostration to God. The reason behind it is that he was commanded to prostrate before Adam ('a) and he disobeyed, but man obeyed and he was delivered.(۳)

The Prophet of Islam (S) said to one of his companions: "If you want to be with me on the Day of Resurrection, you should make long prostrations to God."(۴)

Prostration on the soil of Karbala'

Sometimes, some common material things call to mind lofty spiritual moral values and concepts. Such is the soil where the blood of the greatest Martyr was spilled.

It is recommended for one to prostrate on the soil of the grave of the Martyr of Martyrs {sayyid ash-shuhada'}.(۵) It is because prostration on the pure soil {turbah} of al-Husayn ('a) calls to mind the epic and spiritual value of the event in Karbala.

It acquaints the worshipper with the culture of jihad and shahadat {martyrdom}. From the turbah of the Imam, one can smell the fragrance of sacrifice and selflessness and learn a lesson daily from

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۱- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۲, p. ۱۶۲; Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, vol. ۱, p. ۳۲۹.

۲- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۲, p. ۱۶۴; Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, vol. ۱, p. ۳۲۹.

۳- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۲, p. ۱۶۳.

۴- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۲, p. ۱۶۴.

۵- Imam al-Husayn: grandson of the Prophet, and also known as the Doyen of the Martyrs {Sayyid ash-Shuhada'}. In ۶۰ AH (۶۸۰ CE), Imam al-Husayn refused to swear allegiance to Yazid, son of Mu'awiyah and second caliph of the Umayyad dynasty, since Yazid did not possess legitimate authority and had succeeded to the caliphate by hereditary succession. The ensuing death of the Imam in the battle at Karbala' has always been commemorated by Shi'ah Muslims as the supreme example of martyrdom in the face of tyranny. {Trans.}

.{'the school {maktab} of martyrs {shuhada

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) would not prostrate on anything except the soil of the grave of Imam al-Husayn ('a),(۱) saying: "Prostration on the soil of Imam al-Husayn ('a) has (such radiance that it penetrates the veils that conceal the Truth."(۲

{Meaning of "Subhan Allah" {Glory be to Allah

Sanctifying the inviolability of God, and regarding Him free of defect and deficiency in .{all aspects are contained in the concept of this invocation {dhikr

Subhan Alah states a fact which is the root of all Islamic belief and thought, and the infrastructure of man's relation to God and the Attributes of Perfection. Let us explain :in detail

Tawhid {monotheism} is based on glorifying God; that is, considering Him immune :{from partnership {shirk} and partner {sharik

(سُبحان اللهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكون)

(Clear is Allah of any partners that they may ascribe {to Him}!"(۳"

Adl {justice} is founded on glorification {tasbih}; that is, to think of God as guiltless of' any form of injustice {zulm}. God cannot be unjust to anyone. And if there are to emerge problems, misfortunes and calamities for mankind, they are trials, or means :of enhancing human potential, or as products and consequences of our own making

(مَا أَصَابكُمْ مِنْ مُصِيْبَهٍ فَبِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِيْكُم)

(Whatever affliction that may visit you is because of what your hands have earned."(۴"

:So, God is blameless. It is we who are unjust to ourselves

(سُبْحَانَ رَبِّنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ)

(They said, 'Immaculate is our Lord! We have indeed been wrongdoers!'"(۵"

Prophethood {nubuwwah} and Imamate {imamah} are rooted

p: ۱۴۲

۱- Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۳, p. ۶۰۸.

۲- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۱۰۳, p. ۱۳۵. Traditions related to the turbah of Imam al-Husayn ('a) are found in the same volume from page ۱۰۶ up to page ۱۴۰.

۳- Surah at-Tur ۵۲:۴۳.

۴- Surah ash-Shura ۴۲:۳۰.

۵- Surah al-Qalam ۶۸:۲۹.

in tasbih in the sense that in order to save man from the yoke of instincts and taghuts and guide him toward the truth, perfection and felicity, God sends down leaders and guides for him and does not leave him alone. As such, God does not leave mankind without guidance.

And those who think otherwise have not recognized God and do not consider Him as All-wise, and thus attribute such a thing to Him:

(وَمَا قَدَرُواْ اللّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ إِذْ قَالُواْ مَا أَنزَلَ اللّهُ عَلَى بَشَرٍ مِّن شَيْءٍ)

"They did not regard Allah with the regard due to Him when they said, 'Allah has not sent down anything to any human'."(۱)

Ma'ad {(belief in) the Day of Resurrection} is anchored in tasbih. Without eternal life, the hereafter and the return of human beings for reckoning, reward and punishment, life and creation would be futile and the right of human beings would not be given to them. God is immune from creating all beings in vain and not setting the Day of Resurrection:

(أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثًا وَأَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْنَا لَا تُرْجَعُونَ)

"Did you suppose that We created you aimlessly, and that you will not be brought back to Us?"(۲)

Love of God is based on tasbih because He is Absolute Perfection, the Faultless and ?Flawless Being. So, why should we not love Him

The pleasure of man is also founded on tasbih. Anyone who is pleased with God does .not find fault with His acts, and glorifies and sanctifies Him to the utmost

Obedience

۱- ۶:۹۱ Surah al-An‘am.

۲- ۲۳:۱۱۵ Surah al-Mu’minun.

is also rooted in tasbih. Man becomes obedient, submissive and humble before whomsoever he regards as the Perfect Deity and immune from any shortcoming, .abomination and defect

Reliance on God {tawakkul} is anchored in tasbih. He who trusts in God is the one who believes in His power and Mercy, and regards Him guiltless of any form of ignorance, .weakness and hardheartedness

God-wariness {taqwa} is based on tasbih. The God-conscious person thinks of God as All-aware, Reckoning and Just, considers the universe as the Presence of God and Him as free and immune from any form of ignorance and negligence. Therefore, he is .heedful of God and does not commit any sin

Hence, tasbih—this blessed and profound word—has a world of meanings, as regarding God as Pure is the edifice of man’s love and affection, servitude and reliance, God-wariness and obedience, as well as belief in tawhid, nabuwwah, ma‘ad, imamah, and ‘adl {divine justice}. Since He is blameless, God is worthy of praise and .eulogy

For this reason, in the tasbihat al-arba‘ah,(۱) we immediately say al-hamdulillah .{praise be to Allah} after the utterance of subhan Allah

:The Holy Qur’an declares God free from any partners

(سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ)

(Clear is Allah of any partners that they may ascribe {to Him}!”(٢“

And He is also immune from what they attribute to Him and what they imagine about :Him

(فَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ)

(Clear is Allah, the Lord of the Throne, of what they allege {concerning Him}.”(٣“

He is equally free from poverty and

p: ١۴۴

Tasbihat al-Arba‘ah: literally, the four tasbihs; it refers to the recital of “Subhan - ١ Allahi wa’l-hamdulillahi wa la ilaha illallahu Allahu akbar” {Glory be to Allah; praise be {.to Allah; there is no god but Allah; Allah is the great}. {Trans

.Surah at-Tur ۵٢:۴٣ -٢

.Surah al-Anbiya’ ٢١:٢٢ -٣

:need

(سُبْحَانَهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ)

(Immaculate is He! He is the All-sufficient.”(١“

:He is guiltless of creating things aimlessly and vainly

(رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذا بَاطِلًا سُبْحَانَكَ)

(O Lord, You have not created this in vain! Immaculate are You!”(٢“

He is not guilty of committing injustice to His servants. It is rather the people who are :unjust to themselves

(سُبْحَانَکَ إِنِّی کُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِینَ)

(You are immaculate! I have indeed been among the wrongdoers!”(۳“

.He is immune, from having daughter

(وِ یجْعِلونِ لله البناتِ سُبْحانَهُ)

(And they ascribe daughters to Allah, glory be to Him..” (۴“

And these are the secrets behind the many repetitions of this invocation in the ruku‘, sujud, and many other states in prayer and other than prayer, which is a lesson in .monotheism

Tasbih as the most oft-repeated command

The Messenger of Allah (S) who is especially favored and nurtured by God also has distinct commands from God. The order for him to glorify Allah {tasbih} is the .foremost of these commands

If we try to examine the verses of the Glorious Qur’an, we will find out that God commands the Prophet (S) to trust Him {tawakkul} eight times; to prostrate {sujud} .two times; and to seek His forgiveness {istighfar} eight times

God orders the Apostle (S), however, to glorify Him {tasbih} in ۱۶ instances, and these are in different conditions and diverse circumstances, so that the Prophet (S), in a sense, always remains heedful of God. Therefore, along with the order to perform :tasbih, there are the following lines

Before the rising of the“ .۱

.Surah Yunus ۱۰:۶۸ -۱

.Surah Al ‘Imran ۳:۱۹۳ -۲

.Surah al-Anbiya’ ۲۱:۸۷ -۳

.Surah an-Nahl ۱۶:۵۷ -۴

(sun and before the sunset;"(۱

(And glorify Him in watches of the night and at the day's ends;"(۲" .۲

And celebrate the praise of your Lord morning and evening;"(۳) and" .۳

(And celebrate the praise of your Lord when you rise {at dawn}."(۴" .۴

These bespeak of the importance of the "subhan Allah" invocation {dhikr} and show its constructive effect on the mind and action of the one praying. Imam as-Sajjad ('a) said: "Whenever the servant of God says "subhan Allah" all the angels send (benedictions to him."(۵

Qunut

Qunut(۶) means obedience, supplication and heedfulness of God as well as humility in prayer. And in prayer, it is one of the recommended acts {mustahabbat} in which the worshipper raises both his hands adjacent to his face and supplicates. The late .Shaykh as-Saduq has even regarded it as an obligatory {wajib} act in prayer

According to the Prophetic traditions, the performance of qunut during the Friday congregational prayer, as well as the dawn {subh} and sunset {maghrib} prayers has been given more emphasis. Particular supplication is not necessary in qunut and according to Imam as-Sadiq ('a) whatever supplication to be recited is correct and .good,(۷) but some supplications are recommended as better

The Messenger of Allah (S) has recommended the prolongation of qunut in prayers, considering it a means of deliverance and relief of man during the different stages of reckoning on the Day of Resurrection.(۸) It is also stated in a hadith that the best (prayer is that which has the longest qunut.(۹

In the qunut, which

.Surah Ta Ha ۲۰:۱۳۰ -۱

.Surah Ta Ha ۲۰:۱۳۰ -۲

.Surah al-Ghafir (or al-Mu'min) ۴۰:۵۵ -۳

.Surah at-Tur ۵۲:۴۸ -۴

.Shaykh as-Saduq, At-Tawhid, p. ۳۱۲ -۵

Qunut: supplication recited in the salat after the second rak'ah, in the standing -۶ {.position, with the palms of the hands are raised upward. {Trans

.For whatever ruling about qunut mentioned, see Jawahir, vol. ۱۰, pp. ۳۵۲-۳۶۲ -۷

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۲, p. ۱۹۹; Jawahir, vol. ۱۰, p. ۳۶۷ -۸

Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۲, p. ۲۰۶. In this voluminous book, a lot of hadiths about qunut -۹ .has been narrated

is a state of imploring and asking for requests from God, the better the supplications and more sublime the requests, the better. Some 'ulama' (such as Haj Mulla Hadi Sabzewari) used to recite in the qunut of his night supererogatory prayers the Jawshan al-Kabir Supplication, which is a very long supplication and contains a thousand Names and Attributes of God. Such a prayer is a symbol of love of God and .fondness of making litanies to Him

Tashahhud

Tashahhud is among the obligatory acts of prayer. After every two rak'ahs (and also in the third rak'ah of maghrib prayer) one must sit down and perform tashahhud, which includes bearing testimony to the Oneness of God, the apostleship of the .{Prophet(S), as well as salawat {sending benediction to the Prophet and his progeny

The one praying must sit down and place his left foot under the right foot in such a manner that the weight of his body is on the left side. Since in the words of the Qur'an, the right is the symbol of truth while the left is the symbol of falsehood, the Commander of the Faithful ('a), in reply to the question regarding the reason behind placing one's left foot under the right foot, said: "It means, 'O God! Let falsehood (perish and truth remain'."(۱

Tashahhud is the repetition of the same testimony and announcement uttered at the beginning of prayer as well as in the adhan and iqamah, and it serves to call to mind the correct line

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.Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۴, p. ۹۸۸; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۲, p. ۲۸۳ -۱

(we stated at the beginning.(۱

In the tashahhud, testimony to the Oneness of God is stated along with that of the apostleship of the Prophet (S), and this signifies the attachment of prophethood and .leadership with monotheism and servitude to God

In Surah al-Fatihah we express servitude and seeking of assistance in plural form.(۲) It is in first person, singular form in the tashahhud.(۳) Perhaps, it implies that one must express these testimonies with consciousness and profound faith, and renew .(allegiance to God and the Messenger (S

In this testimony apostleship and servanthood of Hadhrat Muhammad (S) lies the grandeur of his station. God has set testimony to his apostleship alongside .monotheism

It also connotes the link of the person praying with the line of divine leadership and its acknowledgment by him. It equally indicates the preeminence of his being a servant {'abd} to his being a messenger {rasul}, as the secret behind the apostleship of the Prophet (S) lies in his being a 'servant' of God, due to which he has been selected to .occupy the station of prophethood

.The other highlight of tashahhud is the salawat

Sending salutations to the Prophet and his progeny {al} ('a) is the identification mark of Islam and that of Shi'ism in particular, and without which the prayer is incompelet. Although the Ahl as-Sunnah do not recite it in the tashahhud, Imam ash-Shafi'i, the founder of one of the four Sunni schools of thought, has recited the following in his

:poem

يَا أَهْلَ بَيْتِ رَسولِ اللهِ حُبُّكُمُفَرْضٌ مِنَ

p: ۱۴۸

It refers to the hadith from Imam ar-Rida (‘a) recorded in Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۲, p. -۱ .۲۸۴

Iyyaka na‘budu wa iyyaka nasta‘in {You {alone} do we worship and to You {alone} -۲ .{do we turn for help

Ashhadu an la ilaha illallah wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan rasulullah {I bear - ۳ witness that there is no god but Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is the .{Messenger of Allah

اللهِ فی الْقُرْآنِ أَنْزَلَه

كَفاكُمْ مِنْ عَظيمِ الْقَدْرِ أَنَّكُممَنْ لَمْ يُصَلِّ عَلَيْكُمْ فَلا صَلوةَ لَه

O members of the Household {Ahl al-Bayt} of the Messenger of Allah! Loving you is an .obligation, which God has revealed in the Qur’an

On the greatness and loftiness of your station, it is enough that anyone who does not invoke blessings on you (in invoking blessings on the Prophet (S)), as if he has not (invoked blessings at all.(۱

Regarding the essence and manner of sending salutations {salawat} to the Prophet and his progeny, there have been numerous hadiths recorded in Sunni exegesis {tafsir}, jurisprudence {fiqh} and hadith books. It is even narrated in Sahih al-Bukhari that the Prophet (S) was asked: “How should we send blessings to you?” The Prophet ,(S) said: “You say

أَللّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلي مُحَمَّد وَ عَلي آلِ مُحَمَّد.

(O Allah! Send blessings on Muhammad and the progeny of Muhammad.”(۲“

It is a pity that in quoting the same hadith, the phrase “ali Muhammad” is omitted in

!(writing the salawat to the Prophet(S

In other hadiths "al Muhammad" has been mentioned also alongside the name of the Prophet (S).(٣) And in the hadiths, those who at the time of sending salutations to Muhammad (S) do not include his Ahl al-Bayt ('a) have been reproached. For example, the Prophet of God (S) said: "Those who deprive my progeny of salawat cannot smell (the fragrance of paradise on the Day of Resurrection."(٤

And on the contrary, those who also send salutations to the Prophet's Household ('a) have also been

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.Al-Ghadir, vol. ٢, p. ٣٠٣ quoting Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal, vol. ۶, p. ٣٢٣ -١

Sahih al-Bukhari, vol. ٨, under the section {bab} "as-salat 'ala Muhammad" - ٢ .{{sending salutations to Muhammad

.Tafsir Fakhr ar-Razi, vol. ٢۵, p. ٢٢٧; Kanz al-'Ummal, vol. ١, p. ۴٩۵ -٣

.Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۴, p. ١٢١٩; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ٩١, p. ۴٨ -۴

appreciated and the reward of intercession {shafa'ah} and nearness to the Prophet ((S) have been stated.(١

It is narrated in a tradition that a certain person was clinging steadfastly to the Ka'bah and sending salawat but not including the progeny of Muhammad (S). Imam al-Baqir said: "This is an act of injustice against us."(٢) In many hadiths, such salawat is (deemed incomplete and cut off {abtar}.(٣

In any case, mentioning the progeny of Muhammad {al Muhammad} in the salawat is a gesture of appreciation of the pious descendants of the Prophet ('a) and obedience (to the command of the Prophet himself.(۴

And according to many hadiths, the very salutations to Muhammad and his progeny are a light that will illuminate your hereafter, and our salutations are heard by the Prophet (S) and he answers them. Salawat begets a remuneration that sheds our sins

(and becomes a means of our purification.(۵

It is stated in another hadith: “Send salawat collectively and loudly so as to uproot hypocrisy {nifaq} in you.”(۶)

The Messenger of Allah (S) said: “Your salawat to me brings about the acceptance of supplication, pleasure of God, your purification and increase of good deeds.”(۷)

It is mentioned in the hadiths that God and the angels also send salutations to anyone who sends salutations to the Prophet (S), and he will be among the nearest ones to the Prophet (S) on the Day of Resurrection.(۸)

As the salawat has such rewards and importance, it is enough to say that it is a part of the

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۱- Wasa’il ash-Shi‘ah, vol. ۴, p. ۱۲۲۱.

۲- Wasa’il ash-Shi‘ah, vol. ۴, p. ۱۲۱۸.

۳- Wasa’il ash-Shi‘ah, vol. ۴, p. ۱۲۲۲.

۴- See Kanz al-‘Ummal, vol. ۱, pp. ۴۸۸-۴۸۹; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۹۱.

۵- Ziyarah Jami‘ah Kabirah; Kanz al-‘Ummal, vol. ۱, p. ۴۹۲.

۶- Qassar al-Jamal.

۷- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۹۱, pp. ۶۴-۶۵.

۸- Ibid.

tashahhud in prayer, we shall hereby repeat it so as to get those rewards:

أَللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّد وَ عَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّد.

“O Allah! Send blessings on Muhammad and the progeny of Muhammad.”

Salam

point

.After tashahhud, there are three salams at the end of prayer

.(The first salam is addressed to the Messenger of Allah (S

.The second salam is addressed to ourselves and the righteous servants of God

.The third salam is addressed to all the angels, believers, etc

Salam is the request for wellbeing, peace and blessing. Salam is one of the Names of God {As-salam}(١) and it means that whatever we obtain from God is a grace and (blessing.(٢

The salam that we give to the Prophet (S) during the prayer is accompanied by divine .mercy and blessings, and this is the best form of salam

أَلسَّلامُ عَلَيْکَ أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ وَ رَحْمَةُ اللهِ وَ بَرَکاتُه.

"!May Allah's peace, mercy and blessings be upon you, O Prophet"

{Assalamu 'alayka ayyuha'n-nabiyyu wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh}

Our salam to the Prophet (S) is a token of appreciation of his efforts in guiding us, and .acquainting and connecting us with God

At the moment of extending salam during prayer to all the faithful, righteous servants of God including himself, the person praying feels that he is not alone, as he is part of the great Muslim ummah and he feels a sense of solidarity with the men of God .everywhere on earth

A Glance at the Salam

At times outside of prayer, to extend salam in meeting Muslims in the Islamic society is considered as one of the forms of

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".Surah al-Hashr ٥٩:٢٢: "He is Allah... the Peace -١

.Al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an, vol. ۱۹, p. ۲۵۶ -۲

courtesy in social intercourse, civility and morality, which engenders love and friendship, is a sign of humility, and has spiritual reward as well.

God extends salam to the inhabitants of heaven.(۱) And He orders the Prophet (S) to extend salam in meeting the believers.(۲)

The angels also convey salam to the people of salvation.(۳)

The Dwellers of paradise also say salam to one another:

(تَحِيَّتُهُمْ فِيهَا سَلامٌ)

"...Their greeting there in will be 'peace!'". (۴)

These are a few examples of the Qur'anic verses in which the issue of salam is mentioned.

Let us now examine the Prophetic traditions.

One may notice so many hadiths about salam, its rewards and manner of doing it recorded in the books of hadith. We shall suffice here to give some examples which contain points regarding salam:

"The laziest of people is he who is lazy in conveying salam to others."(۵)

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) regards conveyance of salam to anybody as one of the signs of humility and the absence of arrogance and pride.(۶)

Sometimes, giving salam is regarded a means of encouragement while not giving salam is deemed a sort of reproach and forbidding of evil {nahy 'anil-munkar}.

The Prophet of Islam (S) said: "Do not convey salam to the drunkard, sculptor and gambler."(۷)

It is stated in a hadith that the closest to the morality of the Holy Prophet (S) and the

(grace of God is he who gives salam first.(8

Imam ar-Rida ('a) says: "On the Day of Resurrection, God shall have wrath on the person who makes distinction

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".Surah Ya-Sin ۳۶:۵۸: "'Peace!'—a watchword from the all-merciful Lord -۱
Surah al-An'am ۶:۵۴: "When those who have faith in Our signs come to you, say, -۲ "'!Peace to you
".Surah ar-Ra'd ۱۳:۲۴: "Peace be to you, for your patience -۳
Surah Ibrahim ۱۴:۲۳ -۴
.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۷۳, p. ۴ -۵
.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۷۳, p. ۳ -۶
.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۷۳, p. ۸ -۷
.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۷۳, p. ۱۲ -۸

(between the poor and rich in conveying salam (or giving reply to salam)."(۱

Conveying salam is recommended {mustahabb} but replying to it is obligatory {wajib}, and it is better to give a warmer and more enthusiastic reply to salam. The :Glorious Qur'an states

(وَإِذَا حُيِّيْتُم بِتَحِيَّةٍ فَحَيُّواْ بِأَحْسَنَ مِنْهَا أَوْ رُدُّوهَآ)

(When you are greeted with a salute, greet with a better one than it."(۲"

Giving salam not only demonstrates humility but increases honor and endearment. The Messenger of Allah (S) used to extend salam to everybody including the children, (while being proud of this act.(۳

It is stated in a hadith that for every salam there are seventy rewards, sixty nine of (which are for the conveyer of salam, while one are for the replier of salam.(۴

The Holy Qur'an thus enjoins: "Extend salam to yourself when you enter the house, as

the salam and salutation from God is blessed and pure."(۵) On the commentary of the said verse, Imam al-Baqir ('a) says: "It means giving salam to the members of the household."(۶)

It is because the wife and children are the apple of one's eyes, and such a way of dealing with one another from the viewpoint of the Qur'an is wholesome and blessed. It is a sign of life's pleasure, and a remover of fatigue.

It is true that extending salam brings about honor and not disgrace, but it is better for the young to convey salam first to the elder; the one riding to the one walking; the one

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۱- Qassar al-Jamal, vol. ۱, p. ۳۲۱.

۲- Surah an-Nisa' ۴:۸۶.

۳- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۷۳, p. ۱۰.

۴- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۷۳, p. ۱۱.

۵- Surah an-Nur ۲۴:۶۱: "But when ye enter houses, salute one another with a greeting from Allah, blessed and sweet."

۶- Tafsir Nemuneh, vol. ۱۴, p. ۵۵۳.

entering a room to those already present; and the small group to the large group.(۱)

We shall end this section about salam with a tradition from the Commander of the Faithful ('a).

He ('a) said: "The Messenger of Allah (S) used to extend salam to men and women."

But 'Ali ('a) himself did not convey salam to young women, saying: "I am afraid that their soft answer will effect me and instead of obtaining a reward, I will fall prey to the trap of Satan's insinuation {waswasah}."

In explaining this hadith, 'Allamah Majlisi writes, thus:

The Imam ('a) used to do and say so in order to teach the ummah that men have to lessen contact with young women (who are not their mahram), for as a matter of fact, an infallible Imam would never fall prey to the insinuation of Satan.(۲)

{The Post–prayer Supererogatory Devotional Acts {ta'qibat wa nawafil

point

Prayer means presence in the Court of God and participation in the spiritual banquet to which God has invited His servants. Just as attendance to a party has some preliminaries and protocol, the same is true in discharging divine obligation.

Prior to the arrival of the time of prayer, our infallible Imams('a) used to prepare themselves for it, and after the prayer, they also used to engage in other post-prayer devotional acts {ta'qibat}, such as the remembrance of God, hymning His praises, with their faces toward the qiblah. Were they not considering prayer as the apple of their eye? Does man easily detach his heart and close his eyes from the

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۱- Mizan al-Hikmah, vol. ۴, p. ۵۳۸.
۲- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴۰, p. ۳۳۵.

apple of his eye?

The adhan and iqamah are a form of welcoming prayer while post-prayer devotional acts are its guide.

Heedlessness to post-prayer devotional acts and supplications is a sign of lack of interest to the prayer itself.

As recorded in the hadiths, going early to the mosque and waiting for the commencement of prayer have been encouraged and enjoined while the person waiting for the prayer has been described as "guest of God".(۱) Performance of supererogatory acts and supplications after the prayer is also recommended. The Holy Qur'an says:

(فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانصَبْ ۝ وَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ فَارْغَب)

"So when you are done, appoint, and turn eagerly to your Lord."(2)

Now, we shall deal with some issues pertaining to post-prayer devotional acts {ta'qibat}:

Post-prayer devotional acts {ta'qibat}

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says: "As you finish saying your obligatory prayer, engage in supplications and other devotional acts."(3)

The same Imam ('a) also says: "Supplication after dawn {subh}, noon {zuhr} and sunset {maghrib} prayers will be accepted {mustajab} (by God)."(4)

The Imam ('a) also says elsewhere: "The tasbihat of Hadhrat Zahra ('a) (34 times "Allahu akbar," 33 times "al-hamdu lillah," and 33 times "subhan Allah") is better in the sight of God than a thousand rak'ahs of recommended {mustahabb} prayer."(5)

We read in a hadith that anyone who recites this tasbihat has observed the injunction in "Remember Allah with much remembrance."(6)(7)

Of course, supplication {du'a'} and other devotional acts have their merits and so do work and struggle to earn an honest living, and one should not pose as hindrance to the other. Some

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1- Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, vol. 1, p. 336.

2- Surah ash-Sharh 94:7-8.

3- Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, vol. 1, p. 336.

4- Ibid.

5- Ibid.

6- Surah al-Ahzab 33:41

7- Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah,vol. 4, p. 1023.

think that instead of supplication (during its apportioned time) if they go to work, they will end up more productive and successful.

The Messenger of Allah (S) says: "Supplication after the dawn {subh} prayer is more effective for life and acquiring of sustenance."(1)

Invoking benediction and malediction

Invoking benediction and salutations on the embodiments of human perfection, and cursing and invoking malediction on the manifestations of polytheism and personifications of disbelief and tyranny, are among post-prayer devotional acts.

In those that are deemed as post-prayer supplications, we can come across numerous cases of both salawat and curse {la'n}, and it is an instance of tawalla {befriending the truthful} and tabarra {being inimical to the people of falsehood} in the living and guided school {maktab}.

The narrated salawat has its own merit. The recital of "Allahumma salli 'ala Muhammad wa ali Muhammad" itself has been mentioned as one of the post-prayer devotional acts.

Regarding the case of curse {la'n}, Imam al-Baqir ('a) says: "After you finish your obligatory prayer, do not rise up unless you invoke curse upon the Umayyad tyrants."(2) This is because the said ignominious and corrupt family is an example of the taghuts and one of the most vivid portraits of opposition to the infallible Imams and progeny of the Prophet (S), and thus, deserving every kind of curse and aversion!

After every obligatory prayer, Imam as-Sadiq ('a) used to curse and pray for damnation of four men and four women (who were among the stern enemies of the station of Imamate).(3)

How good

.Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, vol. ١, p. ٣٣۶ -١
.Al-Wafi, vol. ٢, p. ١٢١ -٢
.Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۴, p. ١٠٣٧ -٣

Islam is for setting as part of its programs aversion to the tyrants, corruptors and taghuts alongside its devotional and religious programs! Its prayer, its Hajj and other acts of worship are accompanied by disavowal {bara'ah} and declaration of aversion (toward infidels, polytheists and hypocrites.(١

So, post-prayer devotional acts also include invoking curse on enemies of God and .opponents of the line of divine leadership

(Tasbihat Hadhrat az-Zahra' ('a

Another post-prayer devotional act {ta'qibat} is the tasbihat of Hadhrat az-Zahra ('a); that is, reciting ٣۴ times "Allahu akbar," ٣٣ times "al-hamdu lillah," and ٣٣ times "subhan Allah" after finishing one's obligatory prayer. This tasbih {tasbihat} was taught by the Messenger of Allah (S) to his daughter Fatimah('a), and its recital has been highly .emphasized as having huge spiritual rewards

Imam al-Baqir ('a) says: "There is no eulogy better than the tasbihat of Hadhrat az-Zahra ('a), and if there were any, the Messenger of Allah (S) would have taught it to (his daughter."(٢

In numerous traditions, it is stressed that to have a rosary {tasbih} with ٣۴ beads from the sacred soil of Imam al-Husayn ('a) and to recite tasbihat with it has great rewards, (and even counting its beads without the recital of tasbihat is good and valuable.(٣

(And it is stated in a hadith that the beads themselves glorify {dhikr} God.(۴

The turbah of al-Husayn ('a) is reminiscent of the epic in Karbala' and reviver of the culture of martyrdom, and it makes human beings familiar with the Doyen of the ,Martyrs ('a) himself, divine leadership, jihad, martyrdom

۱- It is appropriate here to mention the four hundred martyrs of Iran who, while shouting "Death to America" and "Death to Israel" on the days of Hajj pilgrimage on the bloody Friday of Makkah in ۱۹۸۷, were shot by the ruling Wahhabis in Hijaz and attained martyrdom. It is lamentable to note that such slogans which are taken from the verse of the Qur'an and are enjoined by the Qur'an (to declare disavowal and immunity against the polytheists during the Hajj rites) have been regarded by the crooked-minded ones as repugnant to the spirit of worship in Hajj; hence, their murderous act!

۲- Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۴, p. ۱۰۲۴.

۳- Jawahir, vol. ۱۰, p. ۴۰۵.

۴- Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۴, p. ۱۰۳۳.

self-sacrifice, struggle against tyranny, and remaining steadfast against oppressors.

The tasbihat of Hadhrat az-Zahra ('a), as stated, has been mentioned even in hadith books of the sunni people {Ahl as-Sunnah}(۱) but it is nowhere mentioned that the name of the said tasbihat is Tasbihat Hadhrat az-Zahra' ('a)!

Prostration of Gratitude {sujud shukr}

Gratitude for the blessings endowed by God, the Exalted, is a sign of gnosis {ma'rifah}, courtesy and servitude. In the verses of the Qur'an and Prophetic traditions, expressing gratitude for blessings has been highly enjoined, and it has been stated that recollection of blessings enhances a human being's love for God and makes divine blessings perpetual and abundant.(۲)

It is true that due gratitude for blessings is beyond the capability and power of man, but he ought to express thanks as far as he can for the favors and blessings of God. One form of expressing gratitude is to prostrate on the ground and express gratefulness to the Lord.

And this prostration of gratitude {sujud shukr} is considered as one of the post-prayer devotional acts {ta'qibat}.(۳) The late 'Allamah Majlisi has allotted the entire volume ۸۳ of Bihar al-Anwar (with the exception of a few pages at the end of the

volume) to the narrations about post-prayer devotional acts while quoting ۶۳ hadiths of the infallible Imams ('a) about the prostration of gratitude.

Prostration after prayer is a token of gratitude for successfully offering the prayer.(۴)

In the sujud shukr, the recital of "shukran lillah" {thanks to Allah} three times is enough, but it is stated in a

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۱- For example, see: sahih Muslin, vol. ۱, p. ۴۱۸, sahih Bukhari, vol. ۱,p. ۱۱۰, sunan ibn majah, vol. ۱, p. ۲۹۹ (in the discussion on post-prayer devotional acts.

۲- Surah Ibrahim ۱۴:۷: "If ye give thanks, I will give you more."

۳- Bihar al-Anwar (Beirut Edition), vol. ۸۳, p. ۱۹۴. In this book, around ۸۷ Prophetic traditions and ۳۸ verses of the Qur'an about the issue of expressing gratitude have been quoted.

۴- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۳, p. ۲۰۰.

hadith that if a person would say "ya rabb, ya rabb" {O Lord, O Lord} in a single breath, God will address him, thus: "Labbayk! Ma hajatuk?" {What is your wish that I may grant you?}(۱)

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) said: "The prostration of gratitude after the obligatory prayer makes the prayer complete, earns the pleasure of God, and elicits the admiration and approbation of angels. God will ask the angels many times, "What is the reward for this grateful servant?

They will say to God, "your mercy, your paradise, solution to his wordly problems, and any other reward that your angels many say. They hear no response, saying: We do not know the reward for this sujud." God will say, "Just as he thanked Me, I will also give thanks to him." And with this statement, He teaches the angels that divine pleasure and gratitude to him are more sublime than mercy, paradise and solution to worldly problems.(۲)

It is mentioned in a hadith that God said to Hadhrat Musa (‘a): “The reason why I appointed you to the station of prophethood was your prostrations after prayer.”(۳)

{Supererogatory prayers {nawafil

Apart from daily obligatory prayers (with seventeen rak‘ahs), there are also other recommended prayers {mustahabb} which have abundant rewards. And since these prayers are additions to obligatory prayers, they are called nawafil (sing. nafilah). The Arabic word “nafl” means surplus and addendum.

The number of rak‘ahs of supererogatory prayers is two times that of obligatory ones, i.e. ۳۴ rak‘ahs. They are as follows:

۱. The nafilah

۱- Wasa’il ash-Shi‘ah, vol. ۴, p. ۱۰۷۱.

۲- Wasa’il ash-Shi‘ah, vol. ۴, p. ۱۰۷۱; Al-Wafi, vol. ۲, p. ۱۲۳.

۳- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۳, p. ۲۰۰.

of the dawn {subh} prayer has two rak‘ahs to be performed before the obligatory prayer;

۲. The nafilah of the noon {zuhr} prayer has eight rak‘ahs to be performed before the obligatory prayer;

۳. The nafilah of the afternoon {‘asr} prayer has eight rak‘ahs to be performed before the obligatory prayer;

۴. The nafilah of the sunset {maghrib} prayer has four rak‘ahs to be performed after the obligatory prayer;

۵. The nafilah of the night {‘isha’} prayer has two rak‘ahs to be performed after the obligatory prayer; and

۶. The nafilah of the night {tahajjud} has eleven rak'ahs to be performed before the adhan of the dawn prayer, the first eight rak'ahs of which is called "salat al-layl"; the next two rak'ahs "salat ash-shafa'"; and the last rak'ah as "witr".(۱)

It is stated in a hadith that nafilah prayers are like a gift and are accepted under all circumstances.(۲)

Notwithstanding all the emphasis and encouragement about the performance of recommended {mustahabb} prayers, they must be said on the basis of interest and love, and a person must not impose them on himself. In the beginning, he has to acquire mental readiness as well as interest of heart. Then and only then he should perform them.

Imam ar-Rida ('a) has said: "Sometimes, hearts are willing and ready, while at other times they are not. Perform the act of worship when the heart is willing."(۳)

For this reason, there are some leniencies and facilities in optional prayers; things that are not present in obligatory ones. This ease is meant to attract

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۱- In Bihar al-Anwar, the whole Volume ۸۴ has been allotted to the traditions pertaining to the supererogatory prayers and hundreds of hadiths have been narrated in this regard.

۲- Qassar al-Jamal, vol. ۲.

۳- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۴, p. ۴۷.

more people to perform recommended prayers. Some of these leniencies and facilities are the following:

۱. One may perform the recommended prayer standing or sitting.

۲. One may only recite Surah al-Fatihah and then proceed to ruku'.

۳. One's doubt whether he is in his first, or second rak'ah does not render the prayer

.invalid, and he may freely evaluate which rak'ah he is in

The commission of one or more mistakes does not require any sujud sahwi . ۴ .{{prostration for forgetting a certain essential act or recital in prayer

It is better for the worshipper to go to the mosque to perform obligatory prayers .۵ .but for recommended prayers, there is no such injunction

These leniencies are meant to encourage people to perform these constructive acts of worship. Even if someone cannot perform an optional prayer on its appointed time, he can do so later in a compensatory manner {qadha}. For doing so, according to a hadith, God will address the angels, saying: "Look at my servant! He is performing in a compensatory manner something that I have not obliged him to!" (And in another (hadith, it is added: "I take you as witnesses that I have forgiven him.")(۱

It is stated in a hadith, thus: "nafilah prayers are compensation for deficiencies in (obligatory prayers."(۲

(And they are like alms that a person gives.(۳

{Night supererogatory prayers {tahajjud

Among nafilah prayers, tahajjud occupies a special station, the performance of which has been much emphasized in verses of the Qur'an and hadiths, compared to other recommended prayers. For this reason, the

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.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۴, p. ۴۳; Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۳, p. ۵۶ -۱
.Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, vol. ۱, p. ۱۷۷ -۲
."Qassar al-Jamal, under the word "nafilah -۳

saints {awliya'} of God were heedful and used to offer the tahajjud and mid-night .vigils

It is such that God has made incumbent upon His most beloved servant, Hadhrat

Muhammad (S), to perform the night supererogatory prayers by commanding him, thus: "And keep vigil for a part of the night, as a supererogatory {devotion} for you."(1)

In describing those who are observing the night vigils and performing the tahajjud, the Glorious Qur'an says:

(وَ ٱلْمُسْتَغْفِرِينَ بِٱلْأَسْحَارِ)

"And pleading {Allah's} forgiveness at dawns."(2)

(وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ... وَالَّذِينَ يَبِيتُونَ لِرَبِّهِمْ سُجَّدًا وَقِيَامًا)

"The servants of the All-beneficent are... those who spend the night with their Lord, prostrating and standing {in worship}."(3)

(كَانُوا قَلِيلاً مِنَ ٱللَّيلِ مَا يَهْجَعُون)

"They used to sleep a little during the night."(4)

We read in another verse that men of God forsake the warmth of their beds in order to perform litanies at dawn and the night supererogatory prayer. Their reward does not pertain to paradise, its nymphs and the like. There are things that God has reserved for them which shall make them joyful:

(فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَا أُخْفِیَ لَهُمْ مِنْ قُرَّهِ أَعْيُنٍ)

"No one knows what has been kept hidden for them of comfort as a reward for what they used to do."(5)

As such, all the prophets ('a) were heedful of the night supererogatory prayer,(6) and the Messenger of Allah (S) enjoined Hadhrat 'Ali ('a) for several times, saying: "The night prayer {salat al-layl} is {obligatory} upon you; the night prayer is upon you; the night prayer

۱- ۱۷:۷۹ Surah al-Isra’ (or Bani Isra’il).

۲- ۳:۱۷ Surah Al ‘Imran.

۳- ۲۵:۶۳-۶۴ Surah al-Furqan.

۴- ۵۱:۱۸ Surah adh-Dhariyat.

۵- ۳۲:۱۷ Surah as-Sajdah.

۶- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۴, p. ۱۳۶.

is upon you.”(۱)

It is stated in a hadith, thus: “The nobility of the faithful lies in his night prayer.”(۲)

And Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) said: “The houses in which the night prayer is performed and the Qur’an is recited are like shining stars for inhabitants of heaven.”(۳)

In addition, waking up early and breathing the fresh air at that time bestows health to the body, as said in a hadith.(۴) And in another hadith, in addition to its spiritual effects, its curative feature has also been mentioned.(۵)

The night supererogatory prayer is a sign of man’s love and affection for his Creator, and this interest distances him from sleep and urges him to tell his secrets to the Beloved and pray for his needs at midnight. If this love is not present, what would motivate a person to cease resting and talk with his Loved One in a mystical fashion in the darkness of the night?

We read in a divine hadith {hadith qudsi} that God says: “He is telling a lie who claims that he loves me but when the night comes, he sleeps. Does not every lover wish for privacy with his beloved?”(۶)

The night supererogatory prayer also requires opportunity and chance {tawfiq} which must be sought from God.

Sometimes, sins and lies are the reason behind man’s deprivation of the night supererogatory prayers, and the sweetness of worship and litany is taken away from him.

It is thus mentioned in a hadith: “Verily, once a person tells a lie, his lie makes him deprived of

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.Al-Wafi, vol. ۲, p. ۲۲ -۱

.Al-Wafi, vol. ۲, p. ۲۱ -۲

.Al-Wafi, vol. ۲, p. ۲۲ -۳

.Wasa’il ash-Shi‘ah, vol. ۵, p. ۲۷۲ -۴

.Al-Wafi, vol. ۲, p. ۲۲ -۵

.It is quoted from Misbah ash-Shari‘ah -۶

(the night prayer {salat al-layl}.”(۱

Through constant performance of tahajjud and other acts of worship at night, man can attain a station of perfection, purity of soul and proximity to God, in which condition he would possess divine eyes, ears and hands (in the sense that he will no longer look at anything except that which is wholesome, nor listen to anything but good, nor do anything except good) and attain a stage where every supplication of his (will be accepted.(۲

.Congregational Prayer {salat al–jama‘ah}, Etc

point

The religion of Islam has a significant social dimension, and it has relied on and emphasized this dimension in many of its programs through the blessed effects of .unity, solidarity and consistency

.The holding of the daily obligatory prayers in congregation is one of these programs

In this chapter, we shall deal with the importance of congregational prayer {salat al-jama‘ah} and its various effects.

{Importance of congregational prayer {salat al–jama‘ah

Great rewards for congregational prayer have been mentioned in the hadiths, some of which have been cited below:

The Messenger of Allah (S) is reported to have said: "The prayer of one who hears the adhan but does not participate in the congregational prayer of Muslims for no (justifiable) reason at all is worthless."(۳)

It is stated in a hadith that disparaging congregational prayer is tantamount to disparaging God.(۴)

Constant participation in congregational prayer saves a person from becoming a hypocrite {munafiq}.(۵) And there are rewards for every step taken toward congregational prayer and the mosque.(۶)

The person who goes out of his house to participate in congregational prayer and

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۱- Nur ath-Thaqalayn, vol. ۳, p. ۲۰۴.

۲- Thawab al-A'mal, p. ۸۸.

۳- Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۵, p. ۳۷۵; Kanz al-'Ummal, vol. ۸, hadith ۲۲۷۹۹.

۴- Man La Yahdhuruh al-Faqih, vol. ۱, p. ۳۷۷.

۵- Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, vol. ۱, p. ۴۸۸.

۶- Kanz al-'Ummal, vol. ۸, hadith ۲۲۸۱۵ (a hadith from the Prophet of Islam (S)).

waits in the mosque for it, gets the reward of a person who is engaged in prayer for the entire period.(۱)

The more the people present in congregational prayer, the more its reward. This is a statement of the Messenger of Allah (S) who said: "That which is greater (in number) is more beloved by Allah."(۲)

There is an interesting hadith pertaining to the virtue of congregational prayer, a part of which has been mentioned in treatises on practical laws {risalah al-'amaliyyah}. The following is a translation of the whole hadith:

If there is one person {ma'mum} following the prayer leader {imam}, the reward of the prayer (compared to that which is done individually) is ۱۵۰ times.

For two persons, the reward is ۶۰۰ times.

For three, the reward is ۱,۲۰۰ times.

For four, the reward is ۲,۴۰۰ times.

For five, the reward is ۴,۸۰۰ times.

For six, the reward is ۹,۶۰۰ times.

For seven, the reward is ۱۹,۲۰۰ times.

For eight, the reward is ۳۶,۴۰۰ times.

If the followers and the prayer leader are ۱۰ in all, the reward of the prayer is ۷۲,۸۰۰.

But if the number of the persons praying exceeds ۱۰, nobody knows its reward except God.(۳)

It is mentioned in another hadith that God and the angels love one who loves congregational prayer.(۴)

During the time of the Prophet (S) whenever the number of participants in congregational prayer was less, he would search for and inquire about the condition of individuals, saying: "Participation in the dawn {subh} and night {'isha} prayers is the most difficult of all

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۱- Kanz al-'Ummal, vol. ۸, hadiths ۲۲۸۱۸, ۲۲۸۲۷.

۲- Kanz al-'Ummal, vol. ۸, p. ۲۵۸.

۳- Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, vol. ۱, p. ۴۸۷; Imam Khomeini, Tawdhih al-Masa'il, Issue ۱۴۰۰.

۴- Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, vol. ۱, p. ۴۸۸.

(things for hypocrites."(1)

The Holy Qur'an has also mentioned laziness and languidness at the time of prayer as one of the descriptions of the hypocrites.(2) Waking up early and attending congregational morning prayer while coming from a reasonable distance during the .cold or warm season is a sign of sincerity in faith and love of God

Attendance in congregational prayer is not confined to only one place. Wherever the person may be, it is better for him to find the congregational prayer, participate .therein and encourage others to do the same

Concerning the importance of congregation {jama'ah}, the Messenger of Allah (S) said: "A single prayer in congregation is better than forty years of prayer at home." He (was asked: "Is it one day of prayer?" He said: "No, it is a single prayer."(3)

And the Prophet (S) also said: "The rows of congregational prayer are like rows of (angels on the fourth level of heaven."(4)

The first congregational prayer to be held was under the leadership {imamah} of the Messenger of Allah (S) and with the participation of Hadhrat 'Ali ('a) and Ja'far at-Tayyar (brother of Hadhrat 'Ali). When Abu Talib saw his son 'Ali ('a) standing behind the Prophet (S) in prayer, he said to his other son, Ja'far: "Go, follow the Prophet." This congregation of three persons was held after the revelation of the verse, "Fa'sda' (bima tu'mar" which issued the order of openly propagating Islam.(5)

Effects of congregational prayer

point

In addition to the abundant rewards mentioned, observance of religious obligations in the form of

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.Kanz al-'Ummal, vol. ۸, p. ۲۵۶ -۱

Surah an-Nisa’ ۴:۱۴۲: “When they (hypocrites) stand up for prayer, they stand up - ۲ lazily, showing off to the people and not remembering Allah except a little.”

۳- Mustadrak al-Wasa’il, vol. ۱, p. ۴۸۸.

۴- Ibid.

۵- Mustadrak al-Wasa’il, vol. ۱, p. ۶۸۹; Wasa’il ash-Shi‘ah, vol. ۵, p. ۳۷۳.

congregation has also ample positive effects on the individual and collective life of the Muslim ummah. Some of these effects are mentioned below:

۱. Spiritual effects

The greatest spiritual effect of congregational prayer is the divine rewards mentioned. It is narrated that one night, ‘Ali (‘a) was busy in worship till dawn. As dawn {subh} prayer arrived, he said the obligatory prayer individually and rested.

As the Messenger of Allah (S) did not see him in the congregation for the dawn prayer, he went to his house. Hadhrat Fatimah (‘a) said that ‘Ali’s (‘a) night vigil was the reason for his failure to attend the congregational dawn prayer. The Prophet (S) said that the reward not earned by ‘Ali (‘a) for not attending the congregational dawn prayer is more than the reward for the whole night of worship.(۱)

The Messenger of Allah (S) has said: “If I pray the dawn prayer in congregation, it is more lovable for me than night vigil and worship till morning.”(۲)

It is for these merits and rewards that if the number of persons praying exceeds ۱۰, the reward of one rak‘ah cannot be written by the angels if all the skies were sheets of paper, the seas pens, and the trees ink.(۳)

۲. Social effects

Congregational prayer is a prelude to unity among the ranks, closeness of hearts, and promotion of the spirit of brotherhood. It is a kind of informal attendance check, and the best way of identifying individuals.

Congregational prayer is the largest, purest and most economical gatherings in the

.world

p: ۱۶۷

.{Safinah al-Bahar, vol. ۱, under the word “jama‘ah” {congregation -۱
.Kanz al-‘Ummal, vol. ۸, hadith ۲۲۷۹۲ -۲
.Imam Khomeini, Tawdhih al-Masa’il, Issue ۱۴۰۰ -۳

It is a sort of free-of-charge meeting, familiarity with each other’s problems, and a platform for social cooperation among Muslims.

Political effects .۳

Congregational prayer is a symbol of the power of Muslims, closeness of hearts and their solidarity in their unity of purpose.

It eliminates discord, strikes fear in the hearts of enemies, upsets hypocrites, and is a thorn in the eyes of the malevolent.

Congregational prayer is a demonstration of presence on the scene, and the link between the Imam and the ummah.

Moral and Educational Effects .۴

In congregational prayer, individuals stand in a single row, setting aside all distinctions of position, race, language, wealth, etc. Purity and sincerity of affection toward fellow human beings is aroused. Meeting one another in rows of worship, makes believers experience a sense of belonging that engenders courage, power and hope.

Congregational prayer creates a sense of order and discipline, alignment, and time-consciousness.

It effaces the spirit of individualism, schism and isolation, while engendering a sense of struggle against arrogance and selfishness.

Congregational prayer teaches unity of expression, direction, objective, and

leadership. And since the most pious, meritorious and knowledgeable person must be the one to lead the congregation, it is a kind of training and promotion of knowledge, piety and justice.

Congregational prayer gets rid of rancor, resentments and suspicions between individuals and elevates the level of knowledge, servitude and humility among those praying.

It is because of all these effects that congregational prayer has been much enjoined. Even when a blind man requested exemption from going to the mosque,

the Prophet (S) said to him: "Tie a rope from your house to the mosque and with its help you will arrive at the mosque (and return home afterward)."(۱) The Messenger of Allah (S) did not even permit blind men to abandon congregational prayer.(۲)

On the contrary, the harsh treatment of those who do not give importance to congregational prayer is another sign of its importance.

It is stated in the hadiths that one should not give a woman in marriage to such people(۳) nor introduce them to any body.(۴)

The Leader of Congregational Prayer

point

In congregational prayer, the person standing in front, leading the people is called the imam. Some also call him the 'leader'. In the sociopolitical system of Islam, the one who is in charge of leading a group must possess a set of virtues and merits so that his merits also serve as an inspiration to others. In congregational prayer, the imam must be above the rest in knowledge, action, piety, and justness.

We read in hadiths: "Place in front the most virtuous among you"(۵) and "the best among you" and follow him.(۶)

:There are a lot of hadiths in this regard some of which are quoted below

The leader of the congregation must be one whose faith and commitment the people (trust.(۷

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) said: "The imam of the congregation is one who leads you toward (God. So, be aware of whom you are following."(۸

Abu Dharr al-Ghaffari said: "Your imam is your intercessor {shafi'} on the Day of Resurrection. So, do not let your

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Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۵, p. ۳۷۷ -۱.

Kanz al-'Ummal, vol. ۸, p. ۲۵۵ -۲.

{Safinah al-Bahar, vol. ۱, under the word "jama'ah" {congregation -۳.

Ibid -۴.

Man La Yahdhuruh al-Faqih, vol. ۱, p. ۳۷۷ -۵.

Ibid -۶.

Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, vol. ۱, p.۴۹۰ -۷.

Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۵, p. ۴۱۶ -۸.

(intercessor be among the ignorant and transgressing."(۱

Following unknown individuals and those who have extreme views with respect to religion or Imamate has been forbidden.(۲) Individuals in society who have received lashes for committing an open sin, or are illegitimate children cannot become an imam (of the congregation.(۳

The imam of the congregation must be accepted by people; otherwise, the prayer will (not be accepted by God.(۴

,On the exegesis {tafsir} of this noble verse

(خُذُواْ زِينَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ)

(Look to your adornment at every place of worship,"(5"

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) said: "The adornment of a place of worship {masjid} is the worthy leader of the congregation."(6)

Of course, wearing clean clothes, and applying perfume are also mentioned in some traditions as "the adornment of the place of worship."

Imam al-Baqir ('a) said: "The imam of the congregation must be from among the learned scholars."(7)

The Messenger of Allah (S) said: "Anyone who stands in prayer behind a learned imam is like standing behind me and Hadhrat Ibrahim in prayer."(8)

The imam of the congregation must take into account the weakest one among the congregation and he must not conduct a lengthy prayer.(9)

From this set of hadiths, the sensitive position of the leader of congregational prayer can be realized.

Selection of Congregational Prayer Leader

Superiority and preeminent virtue compared to the rest is a requisite for the leader of the congregation. If there is more than one person worthy to be followed, the traditions mention some conditions which teach us to incline toward certain values to choose the best. Among these

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۱- Al-Wafi, vol. ۲, p. ۱۷۷.

۲- Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, vol. ۱, p. ۴۹۱.

۳- Ibid.

۴- Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, vol. ۱, p. ۴۹۲.

۵- Surah al-A'raf ۷:۳۱.

۶- Nur ath-Thaqalayn, vol. ۲, p. ۱۹.

.Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, vol. ۱, p. ۴۹۲ -۷

.Ibid -۸

.Man La Yahduruh al-Faqih, vol. ۱, p. ۳۸۱ -۹

:conditions are the following

;The one whose pronunciation and recital is better .۱

;{The one who is foremost in the migration {hijrah .۲

;The one who has more knowledge of religion and is more learned .۳

;The one who is older .۴

;The one who is more familiar with the Qur'an .۵

(The one who is more handsome and good-looking.(۱ .۶

.The host has precedence over the guest in leading the congregation; and .۷

The permanent imam of the congregation has precedence over the one who is new .۸ .to the mosque

Among the merits, the issue of being more knowledgeable has been given the most emphasis. This state of being learned and knowledgeable is a condition and .advantage in all cases pertaining to leadership and headship

It is stated in a hadith, thus: "If someone is assuming the post of leadership in a congregation in which there is a person more knowledgeable than him, that ".congregation till the Day of Resurrection will be in a state of downfall and disgrace

Of course, as stated in a hadith earlier, the imam of the congregation must be accepted by the people. This acceptability is acquired through knowledge, purity, .justness, humility, and good manners

It must not be forgotten that sometimes, with the aim of striking a blow to Islam and the 'ulama', the enemies and hypocrites try to tarnish the image of a congregational

leader through rumor, calumny and lies in order to isolate him. The vigilance of the people is the antidote to this satanic plot. One must not stand

p: ۱۷۱

.Al-Wafi, vol. ۱, p. ۱۷۷, Wasa'il ash-shi'ah, vol. ۵, p. ۴۱۹ -۱

in a congregational prayer behind a person who has lost his popularity through transgression, sin and bad manners, but behind a person whose popularity might !have diminished through the evil plots of enemies

Justness of Congregational Prayer Leader

.Justness is an important condition for the congregational prayer leader

Justness has been defined in the books on jurisprudence. Imam Khomeini (may his soul be sanctified), who is one of the distinguished jurists {fuqaha}, says: "To be just {'adil} is an inner state of being that keeps the person away from committing major (sins, and the repetition and persistence in the commission of minor sins."(۱

Purity, piety and avoidance of sin are among the signs of justness. In view of the importance of this characteristic in the Islamic system, Islamic jurisprudence, and the Constitution, the possession of this merit is a requisite for the high-ranking officials and holders of sensitive posts. Besides, important works of the country and affairs of .the people must be undertaken by just individuals

:Let us draw our attention to some of the cases in which justness is a requisite

.In devotional matters, congregational prayer leader must be just

In politico-religious affairs, such as Friday congregational prayer, the person who .delivers the sermon {khutbah} and lead the prayer must be just

In politico-legal issues, such as representation in the Majlis (Parliament) and the enactment of laws, the opinion of just jurists under the rubric of "Council of .Guardians" {shura-ye negahban} is indispensable

In legal questions, the granting and acceptance of rights must be done with the .testimony of just individuals

p: ۱۷۲

Imam Khomeini, Tahrir al-Wasilah, under the discussion on the congregational - ۱ .prayer leader

In penal issues, the implementation of Islamic hudud(۱) and punishment of the iniquitous and guilty is possible if just individuals bear witness to their offences and .crimes

.In economic matters, the public treasury must be in the hands of just individuals

In socio-cultural affairs, the dissemination and airing of news must be done by just people, and the news spread by a transgressor {fasiq} should not be trusted, unless .due investigation and inquiry has been carried out

In military issues, the commander-in-chief must have leadership qualities, a requisite .of which is justness

Therefore, to be just is one of the key pillars of the political system in Islam. It is indispensable in the designation of social responsibilities, and the management of .life's affairs

Means of Recognizing Justness

It is true that being just and avoiding sin are personal to individuals and inner qualities of character, but it is possible to detect these virtues through outward signs in the life and actions of individuals. The traditions point out some criteria, the existence of .which makes a person worthy of being regarded as just

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) was asked, "Who is just {'adil}?" He said: "It is he who keeps his eyes away from those who are not mahram {individuals whom he could marry}, his (tongue from sin, and his hands from inequity."(۲

In a hadith, the Messenger of Allah (S) describes a just and generous person in this manner: "He who does not commit inequity with people in his dealings, does not tell lies in his speech, and does not break his

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۱- In Islam the term hadd (pl. hudud) applies to punishments decreed for commission of certain crimes such as murder, stealing, etc. The limit of these punishments is specified by the sacred law. {Trans.}

۲- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۷۵, p. ۲۴۸.

promises, is among those whose piety is perfect and whose sense of justice is manifest."(۱)

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) was asked: "How can we identify the just person?" He said: "The just person is he who is modest and chaste; who does not draw himself toward sin in eating, speech and carnal desire; who shuns major sins such as adultery {zina}, usury {riba}, intoxicants, fleeing from jihad (which have all been explicitly forbidden by the Qur'an); and who does not desist from attending the congregation of Muslims except under justifiable circumstances. Such a person is just and it is unlawful for people to question his shortcomings and to malign him."(۲)

We read in another hadith, thus: "Be optimistic about the person who performs his five daily obligatory prayers in congregation and accept his testimony."(۳)

Perhaps, what the jurists are expressing as the "outward goodness" with respect to justness is that his presence in ceremonies and congregations of Muslims and his absence from centers of corruption and indecency persuade people to trust him, and in this manner he is recognized as a just and good person.

Regarding just women, Imam al-Baqir ('a) says: "The fact that she observes the Islamic dress code {hijab} and belongs to a respectable family, obeys her husband, and shuns unscrupulous acts and unpleasant gestures shows that she is just {'adil}."(۴)

In some traditions, transgressors {fasiqun} are identified as those who receive lashes in public because of their open abominable sins, or those who are known among the people for their wickedness

p: ۱۷۴

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۶۷, p. ۱ -۱

.Al-Istibsar, vol. ۳, p. ۱۲ -۲

.Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۱۸, p. ۲۹۱ -۳

.Al-Istibsar, vol. ۳, p. ۱۳ -۴

(and impiety, or those who are suspected of something bad.(۱

Of course, the justness of a person does not mean that he never commits sin throughout his life because this quality is only true with respect to the prophets {anbiya'} and infallible saints {awliya'} ('a), but the fact that he has not been seen .committing major sins is enough to regard him as just

The fact should not remain unsaid that if a person does not consider himself just and even declares so to the people, but the people recognize him as just and pious, he can be the leader of congregational prayers and the people can follow him. If the people (are inclined to follow him he must not refuse.(۲

If after the congregational prayer, it becomes known that the imam of the congregation is not a just person, the prayers performed by following him in the (congregation are valid and there is no need to repeat them.(۳

?Why some people do not participate in congregational prayers

Notwithstanding all those rewards and effects of congregational prayer, some people are deprived of this great blessing. It is regrettable to observe that they do not give importance and pay heed to it. Even those who are in the neighborhood of a mosque do not attend the congregation of Muslims. Sometimes, lamentably and painfully, the .mosques are empty

There are various reasons why people do not participate in congregational prayers. Some are really excused and their reasons are justifiable, but in most cases, invalid excuses are presented. A survey of such reasons

p: ۱۷۵

.Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۱۸, p. ۲۹۵ -۱

Jawahir, vol. ۱۳, p. ۲۷۷; Tahrir al-Wasilah, vol. ۱, under the discussion on the - ۲ .qualifications of the congregational prayer leader

Tahrir al-Wasilah, vol. ۱, under the discussion on the qualifications of the - ۳ .congregational prayer leader

:and excuses is presented

.Some people are unaware of the rewards for attending congregational prayer

On account of the unpleasant behavior of some worshippers in the mosque, some .people do not give importance to congregational prayer

There are some who take the bad behavior of the congregational prayer leader as the reason for not attending, considering it as contrary to the quality of justness .required for an imam

Some people refrain from participating in congregational prayer because of the difference of their political views with that of the imam on certain subjects, figures, .etc

Some individuals are deprived of great rewards for attending the congregational .prayer owing to their socio-economic preoccupations and daily undertakings

Some are discouraged because of the lukewarm treatment of the people in the .mosque, and thus, they no longer go there

There are those who associate the shortcomings of the imam's kith and kin to him .and thus, they do not accept him as imam

Some people regard their participation in congregational prayer as contributing to the increasing popularity of the imam and thus, they refrain from doing so without .substantiating the unjustness of the imam

Out of arrogance, there are people who are not willing to participate in congregational prayer under the leadership of a young or poor person in spite of his being sincere, .committed and meritorious

There are also those who are lazy and self-indulgent, and in the acts of worship they are languid and indolent. They treat congregational prayer as a 'burden' instead of an 'obligation' and they

.seldom desist other works to join other Muslims in prayer

Some individuals avoid the mosque because of the longevity of congregational .prayer

Some do not participate in congregational prayer because they do not like the .guardians or caretakers of the mosque

These are just some of the reasons why some people do not participate in .congregational prayer

.As you must have observed, most of these reasons are unjustifiable excuses

If the religious awareness and growth of people reaches the point where they set aside the abovementioned factors; and with sincerity and solidarity, sit together in well-ordered lines; pay attention to the great rewards of congregation; do not regard the imam's bad gesture as inconsistent with his justness; not associate the sins of his relatives with him; and take into account the abundant blessings and positive effects of this "religious gathering", a flourishing of the mosques will be observed, and the .'thinness' of congregational prayers will vanish

Of course, the intellectual and moral competence of the imam, the warm and

educational atmosphere of mosques, the worthy and respectful behavior with congregational prayer participants, particularly the youngsters and adolescents, could play an important role in attracting them to the mosque—the Muslims' center of spirituality and unity. The involvement of the cultural, propagational, and educational .officials of the country is also crucial in this context

If coaches, teachers and parents themselves participate in congregational prayers, pray in the presence of their pupils and children, or go to the mosques, they will serve as an inspiration

.for them

If only schools were built near the mosques, it would facilitate the pupils' participation .in congregational prayers

Traveler's prayer

point

Prayer is a very important obligatory act, the performance of which can never be suspended by a person—even while traveling, in sickness, on the battlefield, on the verge of drowning, etc. Of course, according to particular circumstances, prayer will .assume different forms, but it will always be obligatory on man

While traveling, the Muslim must be heedful of his prayers. Whether in a train or bus, in cold or warm weather, having ample time or in a hurry, he should not treat prayer as insignificant and forget to perform it. When the bus or train stops for prayer or food, one must not miss the opportunity of offering his prayer. And if the vehicle does .not stop, he needs to request the driver to stop for a short while

Conditions for shortened {qasr} prayer

Throughout his journey, the traveler {musafir} has to shorten {qasr} his four-rak'ah prayers, subject to the following eight conditions:(۱)

.First: His travel must not be less than eight farsakhs(۲) as defined by religious law

Second: He should intend at the time of the commencement of the journey, to cover a .distance of (at least) eight farsakhs

Third: He should not change his mind (of covering the abovementioned distance) while .on his way

Fourth: He does not intend to pass through his home town and stay there, or to stay .at some place for ۱۰ days or more, before he reaches a distance of eight farsakhs

Fifth: He should not

p: ۱۷۸

Each of these conditions has detailed issues whose explanations must be sought -۱ .from the books on practical laws

{.Farsakh: a unit of distance equivalent to approximately ۵.۵ kilometers. {Trans -۲

.travel for haram activity and his travel must not be for the commission of sin

Sixth: He should not be a nomad, who roam about in the deserts (and temporarily stay at places where they find food for themselves, and fodder and water for their .(animals, and again proceed to some other place after a few days halt

Seventh: His profession should not be traveling (that is, his work involves traveling; or that traveling is the means of his subsistence, like the camel rider, driver, herdsman, .(and sailor

Eighth: He should reach the limit of tarakhkhus,(۱) that is, at a point beyond which .traveling begins

Ten days of stay

If a person intends to stay for ۱۰ days or more at a certain place while traveling, he .(should perform his prayers in full (not shortened

If his true intention is to stay for less than ١٠ days, he cannot outwardly intend for ١٠ days of stay and thus pray in full.

If prior to the passing of ١٠ days, the person changes his mind for some reasons and decides to return home, he should pray in full during the remaining days of his travel.

If a person reaches his hometown {watan} during his journey, and makes a stopover there, he should offer full prayers as long as he stays there, unless he changes his place of residence and has no intention to return to his hometown.

The person's place of birth is his original hometown {watan} unless he migrates from there. The other place chosen by the person to

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١- Hadd at-tarakhkhus: the point away from the boundary of a city whose inhabitants cannot be seen and from where the city's call to prayers {adhan} cannot be heard. See Imam Khomeini, Tawdhih al-Masa'il.

stay permanently is regarded as his adopted hometown. If a person is living in two places, both places are considered as his watan. So long as the person has no intention of staying permanently in a certain place other than his hometown, that place cannot be treated as his watan unless, without the intention of staying there, the people consider it as his hometown, because of his long stay.

Anyone whose profession is traveling (such as drivers, pilots, etc.) or whose occupation is related to traveling, and as such is always traveling, he should perform his prayers in full.(١)

A traveler can offer either shortened or full prayers in four places:

(١) Masjid al- Haram (in Makkah);

(٢) Masjid an-Nabi (in Medina);

(٣) Masjid al-Kufah (in Kufah, Iraq); and

The shrine of the Doyen of the Martyrs ('a), and the mosque attached to it (in (۴) (Karbala', Iraq).(۲)

In these places, in order to obtain more bounties, a traveler can offer his prayers in full.

Compensatory {qadha} prayer

Prayer is among the duties of man toward his Creator and to offer so is incumbent upon the obliged person. A person, who does not offer his obligatory prayer on its prescribed time for any of the following reasons; such as forgetfulness, unconsciousness, intoxication, the lack of opportunity, being under compulsion, out of heedlessness, committing sin, is offered, but later discovered that it was invalid {batil}, must offer compensatory {qadha} prayer.

Of course, the ladies who have to miss the daily prayers, or any other obligatory prayers, due to

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۱- For more detail, see the books on practical laws.

۲- Imam Khomeini, Tawdhih al-Masa'il, Issue ۱۳۵۷.

haydh(۱) or nifas,(۲) do not need to offer any qadha for them.

Anyone who has to offer qadha prayer should not abandon it totally though it is not obligatory to offer it immediately.

So long as man is alive, though he is excused from offering his prayers, another person cannot offer them afterward as qadha.

Qada prayer may be performed in congregation and it is not necessary for the participants in the congregation to say qadha prayer for an identical prayer. For example, one may say qadha prayer for the dawn {subh} prayer in the congregation for maghrib and 'isha' prayers, or vice versa.

The prayer that has not been offered in the past, should be performed in qadha in the same manner in terms of the number of rak'ahs. For example, a person who is traveling should offer the qadha for a four-rak'ah prayer in full. And if while traveling, a person misses his noon {zuhr} prayer, in his hometown he should offer its qadha in (a shortened manner, i.e. in two rak'ahs instead of four.(٣

Other Prayers

point

So far, daily recommended {mustahabb} and nawafil prayers, post-prayer devotional acts {ta'qibat}, prayer of a traveler {musafir}, and compensatory {qadha} prayer have been discussed. These two types of prayer are the same daily obligatory prayer .(under particular circumstances (in travel, or after its appointed time

There are other prayers, however, some of which are obligatory while others are emphatically recommended {mutahabb mu'akkad}. In order to complete the discussion about prayer, we shall also deal with

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{.Haydh: bleeding during a menstrual cycle. {Trans -١

{.Nifas: bleeding of a woman after childbirth. {Trans -٢

For familiarity with detailed issues about the prayer of a traveler and qadha prayer, -٣ .see Imam Khomeini. Tawdhih al-Masa'il

.them in brief

{Friday congregational prayer {salat al-jum'ah

In the weekly social ceremony of Muslims, Friday congregational prayer {salat al-jum'ah} occupies a special status. It is not only an act of worship, but also a manifestation of Muslim power and the grandeur of Islam. It increases the awareness ."of followers of the Qur'an and is considered a "religio-political prayer

:Regarding Friday congregational prayer, the Holy Qur'an says

(يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ إِذَا نُودِىَ لِلصَّلوٰهِ مِنْ يَومِ الْجُمْعَهِ فَاسْعَواْ إِلَى ذِكْرِ اللهِ وَ ذَرُواْ الْبَيعَ)

O ye who believe! When the call is made for prayer on Friday, hurry up toward the“ (remembrance of Allah, and leave all business.”(١)

Manner of offering Friday congregational prayer

During the period of occultation {‘asr al-ghaybah} of Imam al-Mahdi (‘a), Friday congregational prayer is wajib takhyiri and one has the option to offer the Friday .congregational prayer or the noon {zuhr} prayer

Friday congregational prayer consists of two rak‘ahs and it must be performed in .congregation

Before the prayer, there are two obligatory sermons {khutbayn} in which the khatib {the one delivering the sermons} shares socio-political issues with the congregation .apart from inviting them to observe piety

Its appointed time is from the beginning of zuhr up to about an hour after the recital .of its adhan and later than that, it is no longer permissible

The number of persons offering Friday congregational prayer should be at least five, .including the imam

The distance between the two places where Friday congregational prayers are .(offered should not be less than one farsakh (approximately ٣ miles

It is obligatory {wajib} to listen to

١- Surah al-Jum‘ah ٦٢:٩.

the sermons of the Friday congregational prayer. Non-participation in the Friday .{congregational prayer for no reason at all is a sign of hypocrisy {nifaq

It is better for the prayer leader in the first rak‘ah to recite Surah al-Jum‘ah after

.Surah al-Hamd and Surah al-Munafiqun in the second rak'ah

The Messenger of Allah (S) has said: "Through the Surah al-Jum'ah, God has honored the believers." Thus, as glad tidings for them, the Prophet (S) has made it his tradition {sunnah} to recite Surah al-Jum'ah, and as a reproach to hypocrites, he has regarded (it necessary to recite Surah al-Munafiqun.(١

Importance of Friday congregational prayer

point

There are many hadiths which have been narrated in this regard and it is impossible (to deal with them here.(٢

The Messenger of Allah (S) has regarded Friday congregational prayer as the Hajj .pilgrimage of the poor(٣) and as a means of forgiveness of sins

Friday congregational prayer demonstrates the power of Muslims and is a meeting .place of the faithful worshippers

At the beginning of migration {hijrah}, the Apostle of Allah (S) held the first Friday congregational prayer for the people of Medina laying the foundation of this splendid .and constructive gathering

This prayer has political and administrative dimensions. The khatib and imam of Friday congregational prayer is either the ruler of Muslims or appointed by the leader to assume the post. There are many constructive educational and social blessings and :effects this 'political worship'. Some of them are the following

Cultivating the spirit of fraternity and brotherhood .١

All people from different places gather in a single prayer ground and sit together, without

.Mizan al-Hikmah, vol. ۵, p. ۴۲۶ -۱

See Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۹, p. ۱۲۲; Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۵, p. ۱; Man La Yahdhuruh -۲ .al-Faqih , vol. ۱, p. ۴۰۹; Kanz al-'Ummal, vol. ۷, p. ۷۰۷; vol. ۸, p. ۳۶۸

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۹, p. ۱۹۹, under the title al-Jum'ah, Hajj al-Masakin -۳

distinction of race and color. Whatever is present in a congregational prayer is far greater and stronger in the Friday congregational prayer—this weekly gathering of .Muslims

Formation of the Islamic forces .۲

This act of worship organizes the Muslims around the axis of worship and prayer, and strikes fear in the heart of the enemy as well as thwarts the plots and intrigues of the .discord-mongers

Intellectual and political development of the Muslims .۳

According to the exigency of subject matters, the information given during Friday prayer sermons makes the people aware of political issues concerning their country and the world. By familiarizing them with social responsibilities, they tend to have .greater participation in the society scene

Enhancing the spirit of collectivity .۴

Friday congregational prayer gathers the scattered drops of human beings into a single ocean, and through mutual communication and acquaintance, everybody acquires the spirit of collectivity, and thus, dissension and individualism gradually .vanish

The center for mobilization .۵

The Friday congregational prayer stronghold is the best place to invite people and mobilize them for jihad, defence, solving social problems, and rendering assistance to others. This glorious power of the masses that is formed in the Friday congregational prayer has always been the focus of attention. During the early days of Islam, the Messenger of Allah (S) and the Commander of the Faithful ('a) used to mobilize the

(people and dispatch them to the arenas of jihad.(١

{'Life conduct {sirah} of the holy saints {awliya

The conduct {sirah} of the Messenger of Allah (S) and the infallible Imams ('a) in relation to Friday congregational prayer bespeaks of its importance and the need to .increase efforts for this obligation

It is recorded in the hadith that

For information about the Friday congregational prayer, see the booklet, Namaz-e -١ Shokuhmand-e Jum'eh {The Splendorous Friday Prayer} published by the Qum-.based Dar Rah-e Haqq Institute

Ali ('a) said: "During Thursday, do not take medicine that weakens the body." He was' asked for the reason. He said: "So that it does not hinder you from attending the (Friday congregational prayer."(١

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says: "The companions of the Prophet used to make preparation for Friday on Thursday because on Friday the time is limited (because of their (works)."(٢

The Commander of the Faithful ('a) used to free those who were imprisoned on account of debt, accusation, and the like so that they could attend the Friday congregational prayer while their guardians used to guarantee that they would return to the prison cell. The Imam ('a) also used to allow the imprisoned transgressors ({fasiqun}, under guard, to participate in the congregational prayer.(٣

As a token of commemorating Friday congregational prayer and glorifying these rites, 'Ali ('a) used to attend the congregational prayer barefooted, holding his shoes with his left hand saying, "This prayer has a special divine status." He used to do so out of (humility in the presence of the Lord.(۴

Keeping this in view, the importance of this obligatory act becomes clear, and any committed Muslim must not be heedless of attending this politico-religious assembly.

The Imam of the ummah has said: "The Friday congregational prayer which is a demonstration of the sociopolitical power of Islam must be made more splendid and substantial. The great and dear nation should keep this Islamic fortress as majestic and splendid as possible so that by its

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١- Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۵, p. ۴٧.

٢- Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۵, p. ٢٨.

٣- Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, vol. ۶, p. ٢٧.

۴- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ٨۶, p. ٢۵۵.

blessing, plots of traitors and intrigues of corruptors would be thwarted."(١)

'Id prayers

Islamic occasions are a means of reminding Muslims to remember God, the Exalted. For most of these occasions, special supplications and prayers have been mentioned.

Salat al-'id is the prayer consisting of two rak'ahs which is offered on 'Id al-Fitr and 'Id al-Qurban.

Contrary to other celebrations and festivities which are associated with heedlessness, self-indulgence and sensual desires, Islamic festivity is accompanied by prayer, supplication, alms-giving and charity, washing {ghusl} and purification, etc. Now, we shall briefly explain the prayer of these two festivals:

'Id al-Fitr Prayer

On the first day of the lunar month of Shawwal, which is 'Id al-Fitr, one must offer prayer in gratitude for a whole month of worship and fasting. During the time of the presence of the infallible Imam, this prayer is obligatory and must be performed in

.congregation, but in our time it is mustahabb

It can be offered from sunrise of the day of ‘Id up to midday, but performing it earlier .in the day is recommended

In the first rak‘ah, after the recital of Surah al-Hamd and another surah, one must recite takbir {“Allahu akbar”} five times and perform qunut after takbir. In the qunut any supplication may be recited, but it is better to recite the supplication, “Allahumma ”...ahl al-kibriya’i wa’l-‘azamah

.There are four takbirs in the second rak‘ah, and after each takbir, qunut is required

Because of the peculiar spirituality it possesses, the ‘Id al-Fitr prayer makes hearts aware of God and creates a state

p: ۱۸۶

.Sahifeh-ye Nur, speech dated Shahrivar ۲۱, ۱۳۵۸ AHS -۱

of repentance, followed by asking for forgiveness. It is recommended {mustahabb} .for a person to take a bath, recite a particular supplication and pray in an open space

Imam ar-Rida (‘a) says: “God has made this day as a day of festivity so that the Muslims can gather together and glorify Him for His blessings and favors. Thus, this day is a day of festivity, of fraternal gathering, alms-giving, spiritual delight, and (benediction.”(۱

In this noble hadith, the philosophy of the prayer and festivity {‘id} has been stated :under the following headings

;fraternal gathering (۱)

;alms-giving and attending to the poor (۲)

dutifully inclining toward God; and (۳)

.humbly entreating the Lord (۴)

All of these refer to the spiritual and mystical dimension of the said prayer and religious rites, as well as the social effects and benefits which the people obtain. By giving their zakat al-fitr,(۲) the people provide sustenance to the poor and needy. In another dimension, attention is diverted toward the deprived ones, 'Id al-Fitr is ."regarded as the "feast of the poor

In addition to sociopolitical effects of this glorious annual gathering, it is a symbol of (the power and glory of the Muslim ummah.(۳

Divine gift

The main thing which can be requested from God in this prayer is forgiveness and mercy as well as the acceptance of worship. This is the best gift that God grants to the .worshippers who have fasted

Imam al-Baqir ('a) says: "The Messenger of Allah (S) said that whenever the first day ,of Shawwal (i.e., 'Id al-Fitr) arrives

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.Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۵, p. ۱۴۱; Man La Yahdhuruh al-Faqih, vol. ۱, p. ۵۲۲ -۱

Zakat al-fitr: a specified type of religious dues paid by the worshippers when they -۲ {.complete the fasting in the month of Ramadhan. {Trans

The 'Id prayer that Imam ar-Rida ('a) wanted to offer but Ma'mun prevented it as -۳ he was afraid, and the 'Id prayer held in Qaytariyyah, Tehran during the first march rally of the Islamic Revolution in which Shahid Mufatteh mobilized our nation to form a great movement, were indicative of the sociopolitical dimension of this splendid .gathering

a caller from God cries out, "O believers! Hurry to get your gifts"." Then, the Imam ('a) turns toward Jabir and says: "O Jabir! The gifts of God are not like the gifts of kings... (Today is the day of (divine) gifts!"(۱

{Id al-Fitr as a scene of the Day of Resurrection {qiyamah'

One of the educational and constructive effects of 'Id al-Fitr prayer is that in the said gathering for supplication and entreating in open space, man is reminded of God, the Day of Resurrection and his need of divine mercy, while the scene of the Day of Resurrection comes into view. Remembering the Day of Resurrection on that day is .(enjoined by the Commander of the Faithful ('a

It is recorded in the hadith that on a certain 'Id al-Fitr, the Commander of the Faithful ('a) said to the people in a sermon: "O people! This day of yours is the day when the .good ones shall receive reward. On this day, the evil-doers shall be in loss

This day is the day most similar to your resurrection. Your coming out from your houses and going to the prayer ground calls to mind your coming out of your graves. Your waiting for the prayer reminds us of the gathering in the Presence of God on the Day of Resurrection. Your returning home after the prayer is reminiscent of your (return to your dwelling, either in paradise or hell."(۲

On a certain 'Id al-Fitr, Imam al-Mujtaba ('a) came across some people who were (busy laughing and playing. The Imam ('a

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.Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۵, p. ۱۴۰; Man La Yahdhur, vol. ۱, p. ۵۱۱ -۱
.Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۵, p. ۱۴۱ -۲

said to his companions: "God has made Ramadhan as a ground to compete in obtaining His mercy and pleasure. Some are ahead while others are left behind. What (is sorrowful is that on this day of reward, the latter are busy laughing and playing."(۱

Id al-Adhha prayer'

The tenth day of Dhu'l-Hijjah is 'Id al-Qurban (or al-Adhha). It is one of the most auspicious festivities of Islam, with specific practices and supplications. One of them is the 'Id al-Qurban prayer. Like the 'Id al-Fitr prayer, it consists of two rak'ahs. It is also

.offered in the same manner, at the same time, and under the same conditions

Whether on the day of ‘Id al-Fitr or ‘Id al-Qurban, takbirs are to be recited before and after the prayer (in the case of ‘Id al-Qurban, up to ten takbirs after the ‘Id al-Qurban prayer), which all contain the glorification of God, monotheism, His greatness, and our (gratitude for His blessing of guidance.(٢

In the qunut of the ‘Id al-Adhha prayer, as in the previous ‘id prayer, it is better to recite the supplication, “Allahumma ahl al-kibriya’i wa’l-‘azamah…”(٣) In this supplication, we recognize and remember God through His greatness, omnipotence, clemency, mercy, and forgiveness. For the sake of this great day which is a day of festivity for the Muslims and a source of nobility and pride for the Prophet and his descendants (‘a), we beseech God to send salutations to Muhammad and his progeny .(‘a) and to benefit from His blessings and good things

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.Man La Yahdhuruh al-Faqih, vol. ١, p. ٥١١ -١

Allahu akbar, la ilaha illallah, wa’llahu akbar, Allahu akbar wa lillahi’l-hamd, Allahu“ -٢ .akbar ‘ala ma hadana.” See Mafatih al-Jinan; Tawdhih al-Masa’il

.See Mafatih al-Jinan; Books an practical laws -٣

statement made in this supplication is the most comprehensive request that may be :asked from God. We request the following from God

O God! Include me in whatever goodness You bestowed on this day upon Muhammad .and his progeny

And also take away from me whatever evil You took away from Muhammad and his .progeny

O God! I ask You for the best of things which Your righteous servants have asked of .You

And I seek refuge in You from whatever evil Your righteous servants have sought refuge in You!

‘Id prayer as a prerogative of the leader

In Islam affairs pertaining to Friday and ‘Id congregational prayers are among the posts designated to the rightful government and Islamic leadership. If oppressive powers assume the posts to advance their own objectives, it is an act of usurpation.

Even designating individuals to conduct the Friday and ‘Id congregational prayers and the Hajj pilgrimage is one of the prerogatives and functions of the government and guardian of the affair {wilayah al-amr}. Therefore, such affairs being in control of the unworthy individuals is mournful for the progeny of Muhammad (S). In a hadith Imam al-Baqir (‘a) has pointed to this fact: “There is no ‘Id al-Adhha or ‘Id al-Fitr for Muslims in which the grief and sorrow of the progeny of Muhammad are not aggravated and revived.” The Imam (‘a) was asked about the reason and he said: “It is because on that day the Ahl al-Bayt could see their rights in the hands of others!”(١)

And which state of being oppressed is graver for the

١- Man La Yahdhuruh al-Faqih, vol. ١, p. ٥١١.

infallible progeny than the fact that even the Islamic festivities are sorrowful for them, as they remind them of the usurpation of their rights and the deviation of the leadership of society!

Salat al-Ayat {Prayer for the Signs}

Some phenomena occurring in nature have uncommon characteristics which create fear among people, and at times, bring about superstitious and polytheistic ideas in the minds of the ignorant and heedless.

It is the duty of religions with heavenly origins to draw minds toward the original

.factors of these phenomena and prevent mental deviation

In Islam a particular prayer has been made obligatory for such phenomena, so that the people turn their attention toward God, the Creator of the universe, and regard His power as the source of these changes and occurrences. This prayer is called Salat al-Ayat {Prayer for the Signs} because it is offered at the emergence of natural .events which are divine signs and symbols in the world

We read in the books on practical laws that salat al-ayat is obligatory upon the :occurrence of the following phenomena

;{solar eclipse {kusuf (١)

;{lunar eclipse {khusuf (٢)

earthquakes, and (٣)

(thunder and lightning, and black and red winds that frighten most people.(١ (۴)

{Salat al-Ayat as a lesson on monotheism {tawhid

The occurrence of such events was considered by the narrow-minded ones as a sign of nature's wrath and gods' anger. Since they were unaware of the nature and causes of these events, they used to be heedless of God and focus their attention to lifeless nature. In particular, the sun- and moon-worshippers had their own superstitious .ideas

Offering salat al-ayat

.We shall deal later with some pertinent issues -١

is meant to draw the attention toward the Primary Source of creation and natural .{changes, viz. God the Exalted. It also gives a lesson on monotheism {tawhid

It is narrated that there was a solar eclipse when Ibrahim, a son of the Prophet (S)

died in childhood. The people started saying that the loss of the Prophet's (S) male offspring was the reason behind the solar eclipse. In a bid to correct the wrong notions and assumptions, the Apostle of Allah (S) mounted the pulpit {minbar} and after praising and extolling God, he said: "O people! The sun and moon are among the signs of Allah.

They run on their respective courses by His command and they are subservient to Him. Eclipses take place not on account of the death or life of anyone. So, if there is a solar or lunar eclipse, you offer a prayer." After this speech, he went down from the pulpit and along with the people he offered a prayer for the eclipse.(۱)

We can learn two lessons from this behavior of the Prophet (S):

One lesson is that the Prophet (S) first enlightened minds about natural phenomenon and then performed a prayer for the natural signs. It implies that proper understanding and correct thinking are more important than worship and prayer.

The other lesson is that since he was a man of God and a true messenger, he spoke the truth and drew the people's attention toward God. On the contrary, the deceivers and demagogues

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۱- Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۵, p. ۱۴۴.

would perhaps take advantage of such an event to draw attention toward themselves. They would analyze and interpret even the natural happenings for their selfish desires.

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) narrated that his father said: "Earthquakes, solar and lunar eclipses, strong and dreadful winds, are among the signs of the Day of Resurrection. Whenever you happen to witness them, think of the Day of Resurrection, seek refuge in mosques, and stand in prayer."(۱)

This narration also draws people's attention from nature to the Lord of nature, and in

.the end, this 'God-centeredness' is completed through prayer

Manner of performing Salat al-Ayat

We shall point to only a few issues regarding the Salat al-Ayat. For details, one may .refer to books on practical laws

The Salat al-Ayat consists of two rak'ahs and every rak'ah has four ruku's. In every .١ rak'ah, after reciting Surah al-Hamd and another surah, one may perform ruku' and then rise up, and then recite Surah al-Hamd and another surah, and then perform ruku', and continue doing so five times. In every rak'ah, after the recital of Surah al-Hamd one may also divide a surah into five parts and recite a part of it before ruku', .and continue doing so five times

Whatever is obligatory in the five daily obligatory prayers such as ritual purification .٢ .{taharah}, qiblah, etc. is also obligatory in the case of Salat al-Ayat

Offering Salat al-Ayat is an urgent obligation and it must not be delayed. In case of .٣ solar and lunar eclipses, one may offer the prayer

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.Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۵, p. ١۴۵ -١

from the beginning of the eclipse. If a person fails to perform the said prayer, he commits a sin, and it is obligatory upon him as long as he is alive, and it is valid .whenever he offers it

If natural phenomenon for which Salat al-Ayat is obligatory (such as an earthquake, .۴ etc.) happens in a certain city, it is obligatory upon the inhabitants of that place to .offer the said prayer but those in the other places are not obliged

It does not make any difference whether a total or partial eclipse takes place. In .۵ .both cases, Salat al-Ayat is obligatory

{Salat al-Mayyit {ritual prayer for the dead

When a Muslim, even if he is a child, dies, prayer is to be performed for his corpse after the ritual bathing {ghusl al-mayyit} and enshrouding {kafan} are done. Although it is called salat al-mayyit {prayer for the dead}, in reality it is nothing more than .supplication, because it has no ruku', sujud, tashahhud, and salam

To perform ablution {wudhu} or dry ablution {tayammum}, or taking a bath {ghusl} is not a prerequisite for its performance. The physical purity of the person praying is not .also required though it is better to observe all the conditions for prayer

.It is better to perform this rite in congregation

To offer prayer for the corpse of a Muslim is wajib kifa'i, which means that it is incumbent upon all Muslims, and if a Muslim or a group of Muslims do so, the rest are .excused

This prayer requests mercy and forgiveness

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for the dead one. As such, it is better for the friends and relatives of the deceased and .the believers to be informed to participate therein, and pray for him

This prayer brings mercy to the dead one as well as forgiveness for the sins of the (persons praying.(۱

Usually, in offering this prayer certain recommended {mustahabb} supplications and statements are recited. The obligatory things, however, which are necessary for :every Muslim to know, are the following

.Salat al-mayyit consists of five takbirs

After the first takbir, "Ashhadu an la ilaha illallah wa anna Muhammadan rasulullah" {I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of .Allah} is recited

After the second takbir, "Allahumma salli 'ala Muhammad wa ali Muhammad" {O Allah!

.Send blessings on Muhammad and the progeny of Muhammad} is recited

After the third takbir, "Allahumma 'ghfir li'l-mu'minina wa'l-mu'minat" {O Allah! .Forgive the believing men and women} is recited

After the fourth takbir, "Allahumma 'ghfir li-hadha (or li-hadhihi) al-mayyit" {O Allah! .Forgive this dead (male or female as the case may be)} is recited

.After the fifth takbir, the prayer is finished

The person praying for the dead body must face the qiblah and place the corpse in the lying position in front of him in such a manner that the head of the dead body is on the .right side of the one praying while the feet are on his left side

The person praying must not be far from the corpse, but if the prayer

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.Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ٢, p. ٧۶٢ -١

is in congregation, there is no problem if others are far from the dead body, provided .the connection between those who are praying is maintained

If the prayer for the dead Muslim is not offered (intentionally or out of forgetfulness), or it is found out later that the prayer offered was invalid, it must be offered near his (grave after the burial.(١

{'Prayer for rain {salat al-istisqa

When divine mercy (rain) is withheld, springs and canals dry up and water scarcity takes place, a prayer is offered for divine mercy and rain. This prayer is called "salat .al-istisqa'" or prayer for rain

This is also a lesson in monotheism, and paying attention to the divine power and mercy, because at the time of draught, famine and water scarcity, nobody can be of help. It is only God who can shower His mercy on the people by sending the dark

:clouds. God says

(قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَصْبَحَ مائكُمْ غَوْرًا فَمَنْ يَأْتيكُمْ بِماءٍ مَعينٍ)

Say, 'Tell me, should your water sink down {into the ground}, who will bring you" (running water?'"(٢

The scarcity of water and lack of rain in a place is a sign of divine wrath and sometimes due to the sins committed by the people in society. So, attention to God, weeping, beseeching, repenting with humility might be accepted by God and the .scarcity of water removed. The prayer for rain is meant to earn the mercy of God

Reason behind the absence of rain

As indicated above, sometimes, the absence of rain is the result of the sins of people and is a

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.For more information, see the books on practical laws -١

.Surah al-Mulk ۶٧:٣٠ -٢

.sign of divine wrath and chastisement

The Messenger of Allah (S) has said: "When God is displeased with a community and does not bring chastisement to it, inflation will occur and the lifespan will become shorter; traders will not profit and trees will not bear fruit; rivers will not be full of (water and rain will be withheld from people; wickedness will become rampant."(١

In another hadith, Imam as-Sadiq ('a) has said: "When the rulers and judges practice (injustice, rain will not come down from the sky."(٢

According to hadiths, besides those mentioned already, prevalence of sins, denial of blessings, obstruction of rights, hoarding, oppression and deception, abandonment of the enjoining of good and the forbidding of evil, non-payment of zakat, are (sometimes the reason for the absence of rain.(٣

It is narrated in a hadith that Hadhrat Sulayman ('a) along with his companions was going out in order to pray for rain. He came across an ant that lifted one of its feet toward the sky, pleading: "O God! We are Your weak creatures and we are not independent of Your provision. So, on account of the sins of the Children of Adam, do not bring us to perdition."

Hadhrat Sulayman ('a) said to his companions: "Go back! Indeed, because of the supplication of others, you shall be satiated!"(۴)

So, one must not be arrogant. Sometimes, because of the request of an ant, God will send down His mercy to His servants. At times, He hears the supplication of even an unbeliever, such

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۱- Man La Yanhdhuruh al-Faqih, vol. ۱, p. ۵۲۴.
۲- Ibid.
۳- Tahrir al-Wasilah, vol. ۱, p. ۲۴۵, under "salat al-istisqa"."
۴- Man La Yahdhuruh al-Faqih, vol. ۱, p. ۵۲۴.

as Pharaoh, and shower abundant rain. It is stated in a hadith from Imam as-Sadiq ('a) that the companions of Pharaoh talked about the lowering of water level of the Nile River in his presence, expressing that "This will end in our perdition."

Pharaoh asked them to return that day. When the night arrived, he went to the middle of the Nile and raised his hands toward the sky and said: "O God! You are aware that I know that except You, no one can bring down water. So, give water to us." The following morning, the Nile River was overflowing with water.(۱)

ایمنی دیدند و نا ایمن شدنددوستی کردم، مرا دشمن شدند

ما که دشمن را چنین می پروریمدوستان را از نظر چون می بریم؟

They saw security and got insecure.

.I tried to befriend them but they turned inimical to Me

How can We who nurtured the enemy as such

(forget the friends?(۲

Manner of performing the prayer for rain

Like ‘Id prayer, this prayer consists of two rak‘ahs and is offered in congregation. The .first rak‘ah has five qunuts while the second rak‘ah has four qunuts

In the qunuts, any supplication may be recited but it is better if the supplication to be recited contains something about request for rain, and before every supplication salawat to the Prophet and his progeny (‘a) should be offered. It is recommended .{mustahabb} to recite aloud Surah al-Hamd and another surah

Since this prayer is for drawing the mercy of the Lord, there are recommended acts {mustahabbat} which demonstrate the, weakness and intense need of the

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.Man La Yahdhuruh al-Faqih, vol. ۱, p. ۵۲۶ -۱
.Extract from the poem, “Lutf-e Haqq” {Divine Grace} by Parvin I‘tisami -۲

.servants of God and attract divine mercy

:Among these acts are the following

The people must fast for three days and go to the open field on the third day and pray .there

.They must gather together in an open space

.They must be barefooted

;They must bring the pulpit {minbar} along with them

.They must let callers to prayer {mu'adhdhin} accompany them

.They must also bring with them the aged, their children and four-footed animals

They must separate the children from their mothers so as to intensify the crying and .wailing

.They should not let the unbelievers with them go outside

The imam and the people must go to the open space with utmost humility and (seriousness and choose a clean place for the performance of prayer.(۱

When the prayer is finished, the imam has to mount the pulpit, and hang his cloak, or place it on his back or shoulder. He has to recite takbir a hundred times aloud. Facing the people on the right, he has to recite "subhan Allah" {glory be to Allah} a hundred times aloud. Then, facing the people on the left, he has to recite "la ilaha illallah" {there is no god but Allah} a hundred times aloud. There is nothing wrong if the .people repeat these slogans aloud to win divine mercy and forgiveness

Thereafter, the imam and the people have to raise their hands in supplication, fervently pray, beseech, and implore. The imam of the congregation has to deliver a sermon and request God for

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.Tahrir al-Wasilah, vol. ۱, p. ۲۴۵ -۱

rain. It is better for him to recite the sermons transmitted from the Infallibles ('a) such (as those transmitted from Hadhrat Amir ('Ali)(۱) ('a) and Imam as-Sajjad ('a).(۲

Historical precedence of the prayer for rain

As indicated in historical accounts, there has been prayer for rain during the periods of the prophets ('a), an example of which was the account about Hadhrat Sulayman .('a) mentioned earlier

The transmitted supplications and hadiths about the life conduct {sirah} of the Messenger of Allah (S) in offering prayer for rain, the sermons related to this prayer narrated from the Commander of the Faithful ('a), and the supplication of Imam as-Sajjad ('a) bespeak of the fact that this tradition {sunnah} was practiced in the past.(٣)

In history, some distinguished 'ulama' have also offered this prayer and their request for rain has been granted by Allah. Of course, this prayer is crucial because if the request for rain is not granted by God and it does not rain, it will embarrass the worshippers for not being heard by God. For this reason, to perform this prayer requires courage and sacrifice to the extent of risking one's honor.

One of the most famous prayers for rain in our contemporary history was the prayer of Ayatullah al-'Uzma Sayyid Muhammad Taqi Khwansari (may Allah be pleased with him).

It has been recorded that in ١٣۶٣ AH (١٩۴۴), the same year when the Allied Forces had occupied Iran after World War II, there was no rain in Qum. The gardens and fields dried up, and draught and famine were threatening

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١ - Man La Yahdhuruh al-Faqih, vol. ١, p. ۵٢٧, "Al-hamdulillahi sabigha'n-ni'am"; Mustadrak Nahj al-Balaghah, vol. ۶, p. ٢۶٨, supplication of Hadhrat 'Ali ('a).

٢ - As-Sahifah as-Sajjadiyyah, Supplication ١٩, "Allahumma asqina al-ghaytha."

٣ - See Man La Yahdhuruh al-Faqih, under the discussion on the prayer for rain.

the people of Qum.

The abovementioned religious authority {marja' at-taqlid} went to the open fields in the suburbs of Qum for two successive days, in order to pray for rain. Although this move was subjected to the insults of those who were denying spiritual and unseen affairs, on the second day, there was such a heavy downpour that the rivulets were overflowing. This was the effect of the lofty spirit of that man of God.(١)

Other prayers

For the purpose of establishing relationship between God and His servant, many :prayers have been recommended, among which are the following

- ;Salat al-Ghufaylah
- ;Salat al-Hajat
- ;(Salat al-Layl ad-Dafan (prayer on the first night of burial of a dead Muslim
- Prayer on the first day of the month; and
- Many other prayers which are discussed in the books on supplications and those .who are interested may refer to those books

I shall end up this writing with the hope that it will serve as a provision in the hereafter .and a useful venture for me and others

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.Bihar al-Anwar

.Fihrist 'Azr al-Hikam

.Fihrist Ghurar al-Hikam

.Furu‘ al-Kafi

.Ghurar al-Hikam

.Golestan-e Sa‘di

.Jami‘ as-Sa‘adat

.Jawahir

.Kanz al-‘Ummal

.Lutf-e Haqq

.Lughatnameh-ye Dehkhoda

.Mafatih al-Jinan

.Majma‘ al-Bayan

.Makarim al-Akhlaq

.Man La Yahdhuruh al-Faqih

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.Tuhaf al-'Uqul

.Usul al-Kafi

.Uyun Akhbar ar-Rida‘

.Wasa’il ash-Shi‘ah

.Ziyarah Jami‘ah Kabirah

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Athar al-Hujjah va Ganjineh-ye Daneshmandan, vol. ۱, p. ۳۲۴. The grave of the late -۱ Khwansari is located in the shrine of Hadhrat Fatimah al-Ma‘sumah (may Allah be .pleased with her) in Qum

About center

In the name of Allah

هَلْيَسْتَوِيالَّذِينَيَعْلَمُونَوَالَّذِينَلَايَعْلَمُونَ
?Are those who know equal to those who do not know
al-Zumar: ۹

:Introduction
Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan, from ۲۰۰۷, under the authority of Ayatollah Haj SayyedHasanFaqihImami (God blesses his soul), by sincere and daily efforts of university and seminary elites and sophisticated groups began its activities .in religious, cultural and scientific fields

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:Appreciation

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